

BOOTHAEVEN'S issue three, 2020. A great music fanzine containing interviews with Antidote, Spoiler, Shark Attack, Maggot Stomp and Animal Club.

All this, more or less.

Poof. Numéro tres, amigos! So, what do we have here? Very much same ol', same ol' I guess. Never change a winning team unless your bribed. Hence, only this will be different:

- For starters: there will be no top 5, 10, 20, whatever albums of 2019.
- I won't be doin' any black metal shizzle: there was a bulky portion of that in the previous two issues and that's sufficient for now. Plus, I read stories of a black metal "leader", convincing his drunk "followers" to fuck a sheep for Satan. I'm not into that: animal rights over bestiality. Always!
- About that: I decided not to openly promote veganism. I seriously considered to shove in Farhad Manjoo's column '*Stop Mocking Vegans*' somewhere in this issue since its content is far more important than anything I could come up with, but, that would be a bit lame, wouldn't it? Besides: words can't really explain the ethical necessity of this matter. Instead I would urge you to surf a way to the *filmingforliberation.com* website for a wake-up call on a more visceral level.
- There will be no reviews. I enjoyed the outro on the latest Madball record way too much and went into a huge reggae/dub phase, hence everything is now '*all good, man*'. Except for Babylon, bah.
- Haven't changed the name of the zine to 'Bootheaven'. I realize people refer to the zine as 'Bootheaven' more often than they use the actual name (even my MS Word spelling corrector suggests otherwise). But, no, 'Boothaeven' is not a typo and yes, I know Beethoven sounds cooler, but that name was already taken. Besides, what is a bootheaven anyway? Texas? The Dr. Martens store?



OK, that being said. Let's kick it off. Here are some of the records I appreciated most in 2019 (order depending on the mood). Top 2019 time.

Pissgrave 'Posthumous Humiliation' would be more obvious (wow, that track 'Rusted Winds' sounds like they've eaten an entire My Dying Bride cucumber), yet I decided to go for **Encoffinized's 'Chambers of Deprivation'** as 2019's sick pick. Their guitar player has the looks of Billy Stranger Things after a Magnum PI make-over and that's more than enough reason to end up in this list.

"Zapata vive, la lucha sigue!" Mr. Eduardo Ramirez puts the pesos where his mouth is. **Volahn's 'El Tigre Del Sur'** is a homage to the Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata. The one song concept EP by one of the more notorious entities of Cali's Black Twilight Circle is by far the best black metal release of 2019. It's not even a black metal record pur-sang: somewhere down the road it evolves in a gritty Morricone western styled ballad. Goes nice with a burrito too.

And then there's 'The Godfathers of NYHC'. Just when I thought I was out, they pull me back in. In all fairness I must admit that I ignored most of their newer stuff, but with Sean Taggart evoking The Eliminator once again the cover artwork looked like I had to give **this album** a listen. Shit, I simply love **this band**. Haven't we all at some point?

They call their music Down Tuned Drug Death; it's down tuned, it's death metal and it's highly addictive. It's probably slam-inspired as well, but I'm not really familiar with that genre, so it probably isn't. I remember someone describing Death as death metal for the thinking man, well, **Sanguisugabogg's Pornographic Seizures EP** is somewhat the complete opposite: Nam gnikniht eht rof latem htaed.

Well smack my ass and call me Judy! **This is fantastic! Mindforce** putting the J.J. Rambo in hardcore (**Excalibur** is indeed a 2018 release, but that only depends of your spatial point of view).

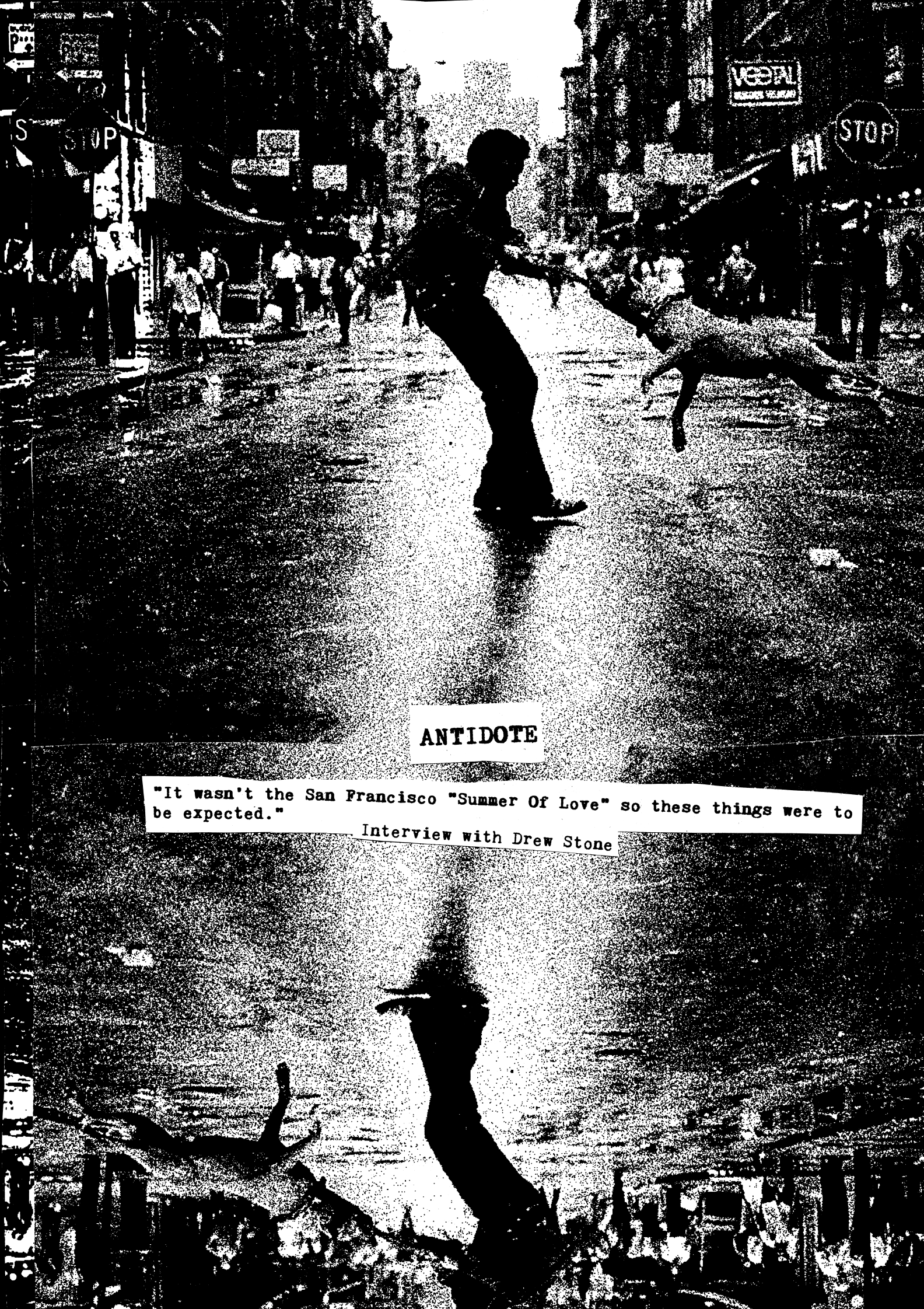
The four **Parasite** Bandcamp promo tracks. Why? I figured half of the people will be part psyched for this band all of the time and some of the people will be all psyched for this band part of the time. I think Bob Dylan Said that.

Finally there was the **Hidden History of The Human Race** as told by **Blood Incantation**. One could expect this to be awesome and it turned out to be even more awesome. Actually, I thought about doing an interview with them. The record sleeve said: "To contact Blood Incantation: concentrate". Sadly I must have concentrated the wrong number and ended up with a Maggot Stomp interview instead. Sorry 'bout that.



Thanks to all whom helped me realizing this little project of mine and most of all thank you for showing interest in it!

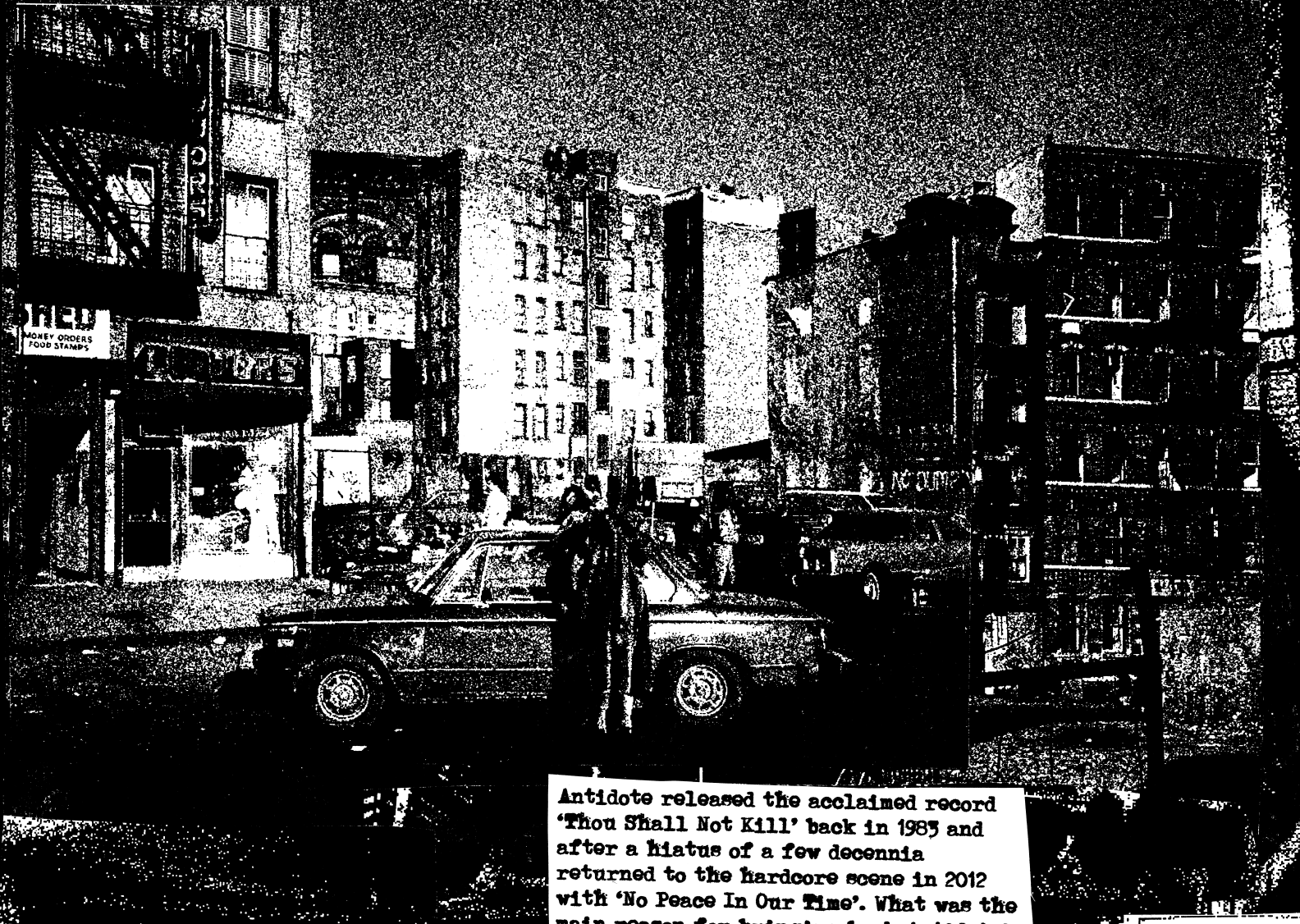
lowiegeers@gmail.com



ANTIDOTE

"It wasn't the San Francisco "Summer Of Love" so these things were to be expected."

Interview with Drew Stone

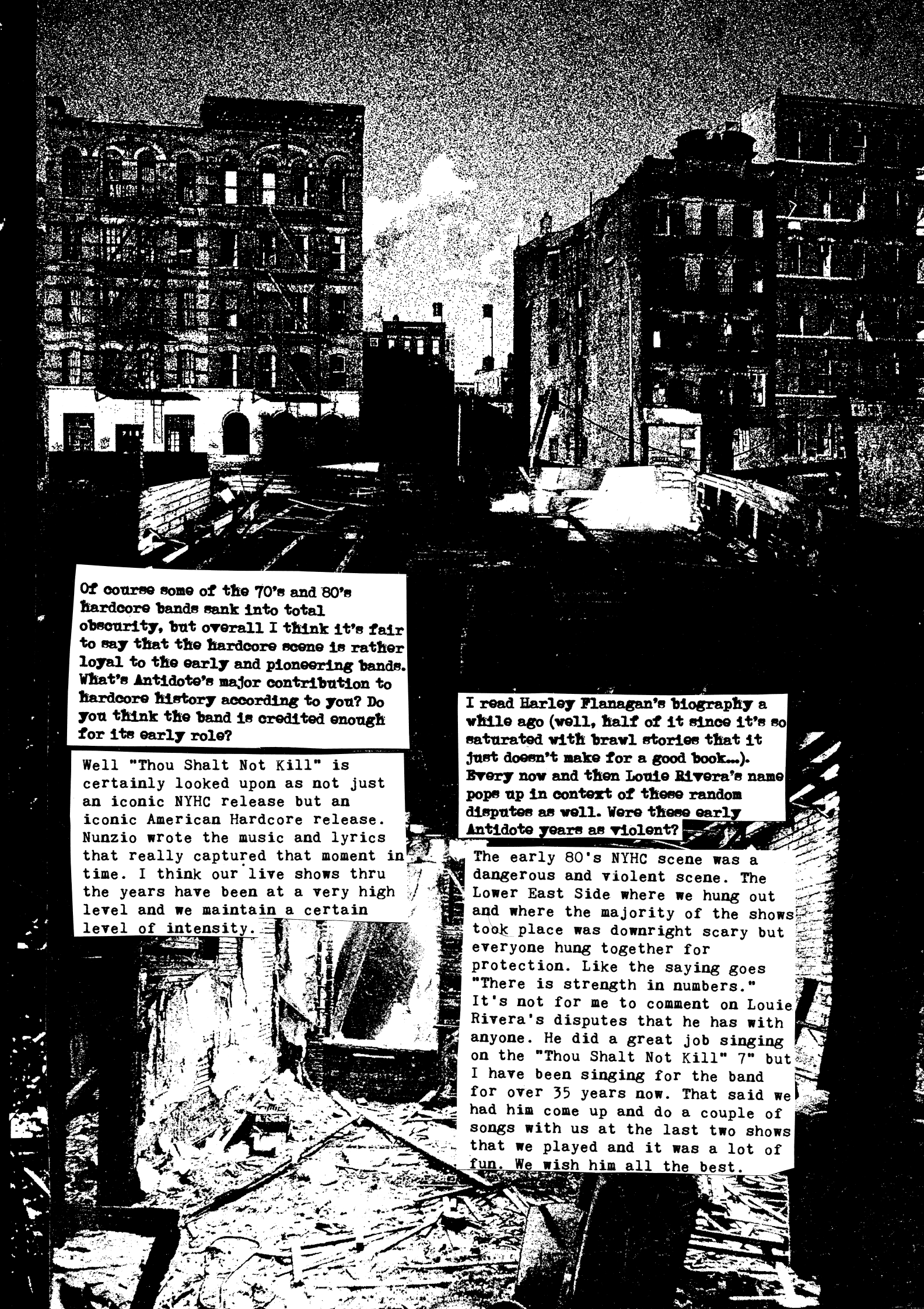


Antidote released the acclaimed record 'Thou Shall Not Kill' back in 1985 and after a hiatus of a few decennia returned to the hardcore scene in 2012 with 'No Peace In Our Time'. What was the main reason for bringing back Antidote? What are the goals you still want to accomplish with Antidote?

In December of 2008 we were asked to play the "A7 Reunion show" at the Knitting Factory here in NYC. It was 16 years since we last played and we weren't really sure if anyone was even going to give a shit. Regardless to say when we got out on stage to play it was packed to the rafters with a whole new generation of kids that love the music, know all the lyrics and went fucking crazy. What started as a few "Reunion" shows has become more of a long term thing since the shows have been so much fun. We signed to the record label Bridge Nine records who re-released the old stuff as well some great merchandise. We recorded "No Peace In Our Time" and started playing places that we never had before like the west coast of America and Europe. I am busy being a filmmaker these days but we get back together and play a few shows a year mostly in and around the New York City area. When we do get together it's like a family reunion and is a lot of fun.

What did HC mean to you at first when you got into it and what does it mean to you these days?

Early on there was a very strong sense of community. There was a real "us against them" mentality. Unfortunately that changed as more people came into the scene and things became a bit more diverse. Things also became a bit more territorial in the mid 80's and there was a lot of inner strife. Then again it wasn't the San Francisco "Summer Of Love" so these things were to be expected. Hardcore is an aggressive form of music that for the most part attracts aggressive people. It's certainly not for the faint of heart. That said things have come full circle and thankfully these days violence is not a predominant part of the scene. I still sing in a hardcore band (Antidote) and have directed films about it (The NYHC Chronicles Film, xxx ALL AGES xxx The Boston Hardcore Film) I love it and it will always be a big part of my life.



Of course some of the 70's and 80's hardcore bands sank into total obscurity, but overall I think it's fair to say that the hardcore scene is rather loyal to the early and pioneering bands. What's Antidote's major contribution to hardcore history according to you? Do you think the band is credited enough for its early role?

Well "Thou Shalt Not Kill" is certainly looked upon as not just an iconic NYHC release but an iconic American Hardcore release. Nunzio wrote the music and lyrics that really captured that moment in time. I think our live shows thru the years have been at a very high level and we maintain a certain level of intensity.

I read Harley Flanagan's biography a while ago (well, half of it since it's so saturated with brawl stories that it just doesn't make for a good book...). Every now and then Louie Rivera's name pops up in context of these random disputes as well. Were these early Antidote years as violent?

The early 80's NYHC scene was a dangerous and violent scene. The Lower East Side where we hung out and where the majority of the shows took place was downright scary but everyone hung together for protection. Like the saying goes "There is strength in numbers." It's not for me to comment on Louie Rivera's disputes that he has with anyone. He did a great job singing on the "Thou Shalt Not Kill" 7" but I have been singing for the band for over 35 years now. That said we had him come up and do a couple of songs with us at the last two shows that we played and it was a lot of fun. We wish him all the best.





You're from NY, yet you played your role in the Boston hardcore scene as well. I suppose that wasn't always easy because of the tensions between these rivaling scenes: how did you maneuver yourself between the antagonists? Have you ever gotten into awkward situations because of this specific context?

I grew up in New York City but went up to Boston to study acting at Emerson College from September 1981 to June 1983 and was a part of the original "Boston Crew" that ran around and supported SS Decontrol. I'm thanked on their first record "The Kids Will Have Their Say." It was a very vibrant and exciting time to say the least. I moved back to NYC in the summer of 1983 and immediately formed The High & The Mighty and started playing shows. The High and The Mighty was a real A7 band. At that point there were no problems between Boston and New York really. That all really started up in late 1983 and by then I was in New York and a little disconnected to what the Boston guys were doing. The Boston guys got a bit over their heads when they came down to NYC and flexed around guys like Harley Flanagan and Jimmy Gestapo. Not a good idea still to this day.

Most HC/Punk records from the early 80's have a rather distinct sound (production wise). The 'Thou Shall Not Kill' ep on the other hand sounds rather different: grittier, heavier, more modern in a way... Do you know if that was an objective of the band? Did they try something different as far as the recording process went? Apparently the EP was recorded first by Earl and HR from the Bad Brains. Have you ever heard that version of the record? Was it really that bad and do you know what went wrong?

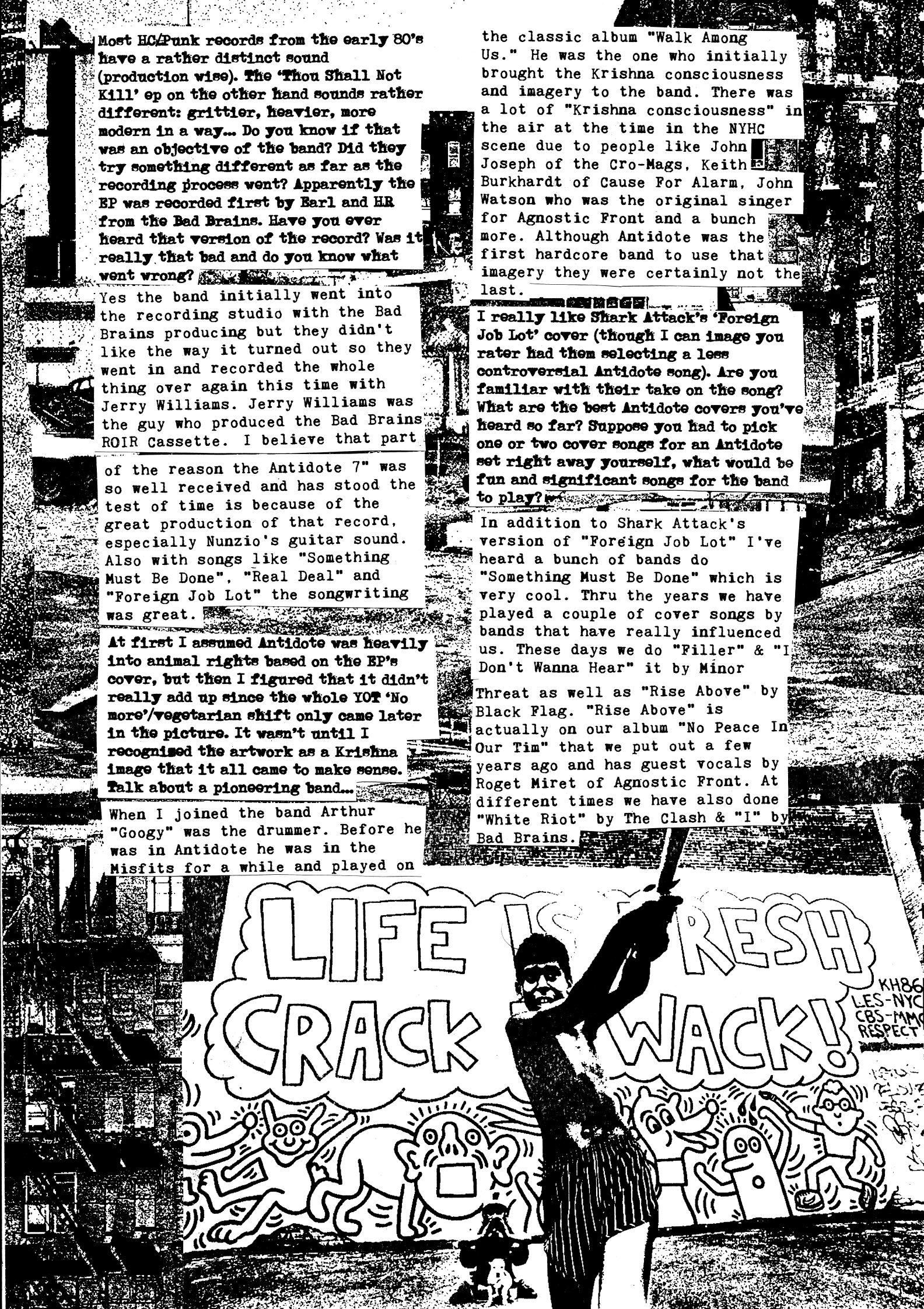
Yes the band initially went into the recording studio with the Bad Brains producing but they didn't like the way it turned out so they went in and recorded the whole thing over again this time with Jerry Williams. Jerry Williams was the guy who produced the Bad Brains ROIR Cassette. I believe that part of the reason the Antidote 7" was so well received and has stood the test of time is because of the great production of that record, especially Nunzio's guitar sound. Also with songs like "Something Must Be Done", "Real Deal" and "Foreign Job Lot" the songwriting was great.

At first I assumed Antidote was heavily into animal rights based on the EP's cover, but then I figured that it didn't really add up since the whole YOT 'No more'/vegetarian shift only came later in the picture. It wasn't until I recognised the artwork as a Krishna image that it all came to make sense. Talk about a pioneering band...

When I joined the band Arthur "Googy" was the drummer. Before he was in Antidote he was in the Misfits for a while and played on the classic album "Walk Among Us." He was the one who initially brought the Krishna consciousness and imagery to the band. There was a lot of "Krishna consciousness" in the air at the time in the NYHC scene due to people like John Joseph of the Cro-Mags, Keith Burkhardt of Cause For Alarm, John Watson who was the original singer for Agnostic Front and a bunch more. Although Antidote was the first hardcore band to use that imagery they were certainly not the last.

I really like Shark Attack's 'Foreign Job Lot' cover (though I can image you rater had them selecting a less controversial Antidote song). Are you familiar with their take on the song? What are the best Antidote covers you've heard so far? Suppose you had to pick one or two cover songs for an Antidote set right away yourself, what would be fun and significant songs for the band to play?

In addition to Shark Attack's version of "Foreign Job Lot" I've heard a bunch of bands do "Something Must Be Done" which is very cool. Thru the years we have played a couple of cover songs by bands that have really influenced us. These days we do "Filler" & "I Don't Wanna Hear" it by Minor Threat as well as "Rise Above" by Black Flag. "Rise Above" is actually on our album "No Peace In Our Tim" that we put out a few years ago and has guest vocals by Roget Miret of Agnostic Front. At different times we have also done "White Riot" by The Clash & "I" by Bad Brains.





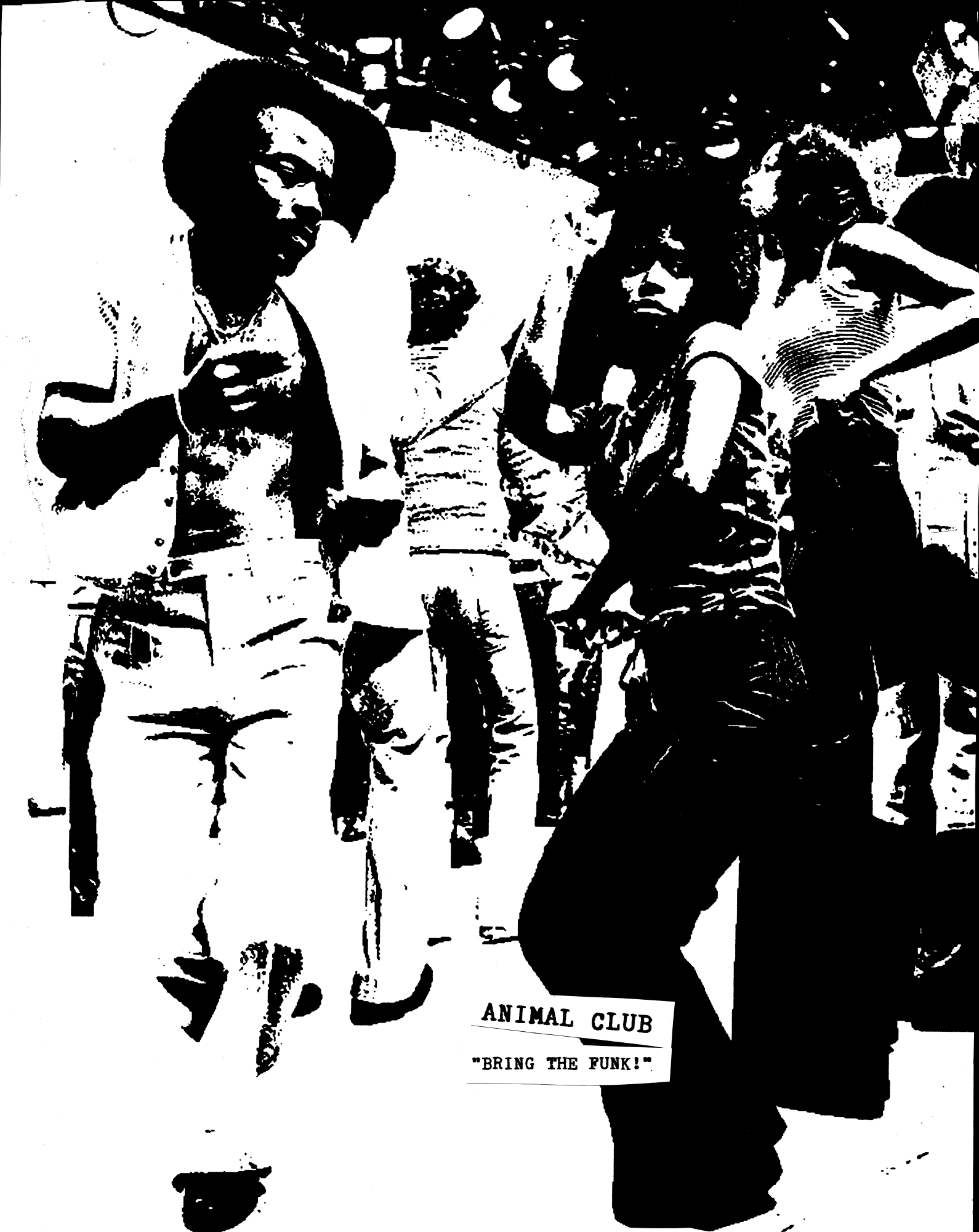
As a film-director interested in the visual aspect of things: what are the visual characteristics or elements from the hardcore culture that have always appealed to you? These things considered: what's the most hardcore movie you've ever seen?

The D.I.Y. ethos is the biggest thing that I took away for the original hardcore scene that I was a part of. To this day I still live my life by many of those principles. The most "Hardcore" movie I've seen is the film I directed "The New York Hardcore Chronicles Film!! That said I thought "American History X", & "Taxi Driver" were pretty "Hardcore"

What's your next project we should be on the lookout for?

I've got a few things up my sleeve. The film I directed "Who The Fuck Is That Guy? The Fabulous Journey Of Michael Alago" is on Netflix right now. I'm the Executive Producer on a Muhammad Ali documentary called "Me Whee" that my family just released for free for all to see on YouTube.

My other films "The New York Hardcore Chronicles Film", "The New York Hardcore Chronicles Film 1.5" and "xxx ALL AGES xxx The Boston Hardcore film" are all on Amazon, I-Tunes, Google play and other platforms. I've also been working on two books. One is "The New York Hardcore Chronicles Vol. #1 (1980-1989)" which is basically people commenting on flyers from shows in that first wave of NYHC. The other book is called "The Road To Ruin" which is about growing up as part of the "Black Generation" in New York City in the 1970's and 80's. I just returned for the Middle East where I've started shooting my new film "The Jews and The Blues" and Antidote has a few shows coming up and I'm also doing my acoustic thing with The Drew Stone Hit Squad every now and then. That said I'm going back to work, Thank you for the support and I'll see you soon!

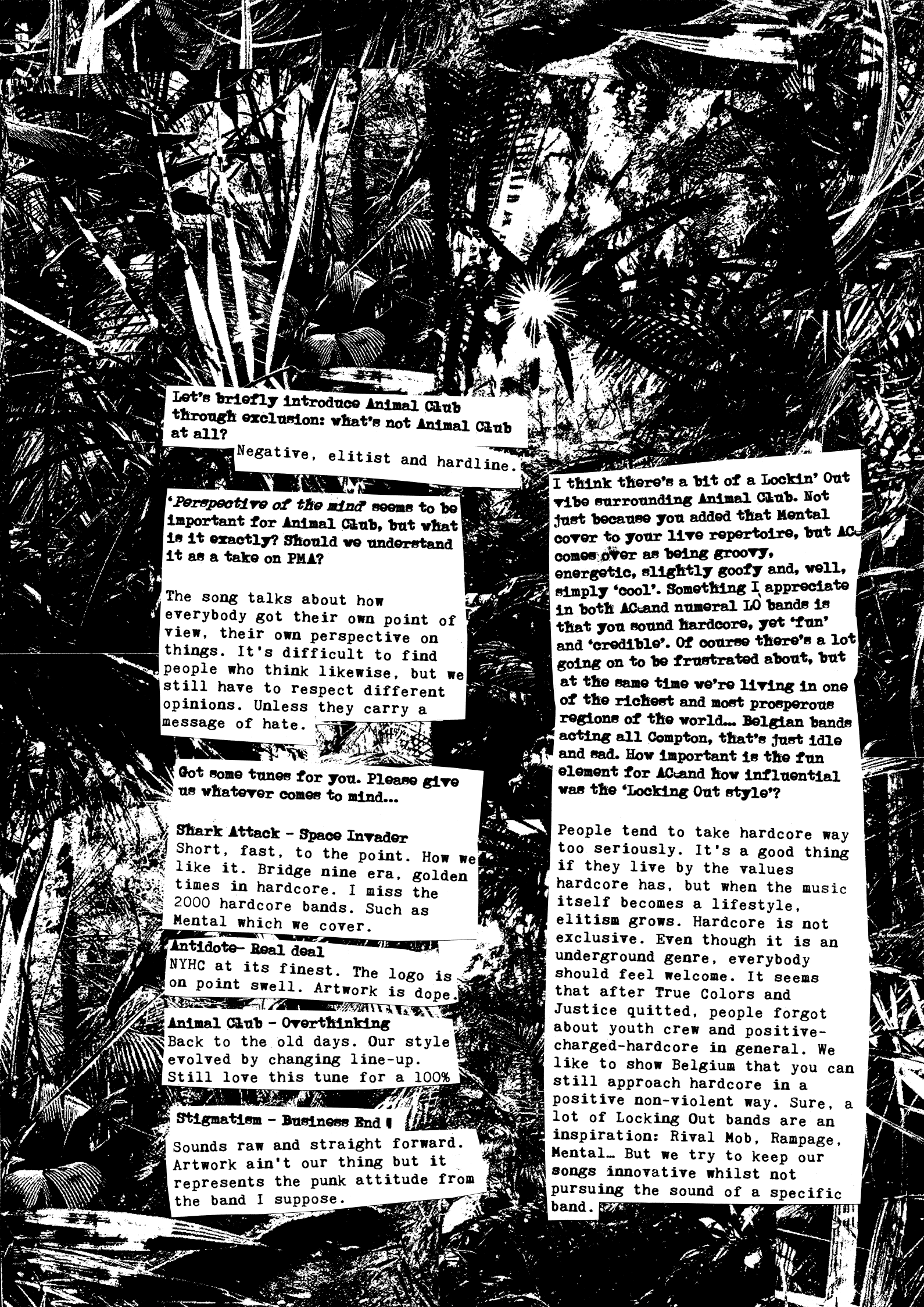


ANIMAL CLUB

"BRING THE FUNK!"

Interview with xDAVYx

band pictures by Kevienpictures



Let's briefly introduce Animal Club through exclusion: what's not Animal Club at all?

Negative, elitist and hardline.

'*Perspective of the mind*' seems to be important for Animal Club, but what is it exactly? Should we understand it as a take on PMA?

The song talks about how everybody got their own point of view, their own perspective on things. It's difficult to find people who think likewise, but we still have to respect different opinions. Unless they carry a message of hate.

Got some tunes for you. Please give us whatever comes to mind...

Shark Attack - Space Invader
Short, fast, to the point. How we like it. Bridge nine era, golden times in hardcore. I miss the 2000 hardcore bands. Such as Mental which we cover.

Antidote- Real deal
NYHC at its finest. The logo is on point swell. Artwork is dope.

Animal Club - Overthinking
Back to the old days. Our style evolved by changing line-up. Still love this tune for a 100%

Stigmatism - Business End

Sounds raw and straight forward. Artwork ain't our thing but it represents the punk attitude from the band I suppose.

I think there's a bit of a Lockin' Out vibe surrounding Animal Club. Not just because you added that Mental cover to your live repertoire, but AC comes over as being groovy, energetic, slightly goofy and, well, simply 'cool'. Something I appreciate in both AC and numeral LO bands is that you sound hardcore, yet 'fun' and 'credible'. Of course there's a lot going on to be frustrated about, but at the same time we're living in one of the richest and most prosperous regions of the world... Belgian bands acting all Compton, that's just idle and sad. How important is the fun element for AC and how influential was the 'Locking Out style'?

People tend to take hardcore way too seriously. It's a good thing if they live by the values hardcore has, but when the music itself becomes a lifestyle, elitism grows. Hardcore is not exclusive. Even though it is an underground genre, everybody should feel welcome. It seems that after True Colors and Justice quitted, people forgot about youth crew and positive-charged-hardcore in general. We like to show Belgium that you can still approach hardcore in a positive non-violent way. Sure, a lot of Locking Out bands are an inspiration: Rival Mob, Rampage, Mental... But we try to keep our songs innovative whilst not pursuing the sound of a specific band.



There were and still are some great old school bands doing their thing in Belgium but the hardcore landscape here is predominantly a metalcore matter. In fact, since the mid-90's, there's a big chance one discovers the more traditional hardcore through metalcore first. Was that the case for you guys? And if so, how did you turn towards old school/youth crew? Do you consider it an advantage for Animal Club that the band is a rather a-typical Belgian HC-band?

We rolled into to hardcore genre with bands like Parkway Drive and Heaven Shall Burn, not the OG H8000 metalcore tho. Except for our drummer and bassist, they grew up in the H8000 scene. Davy discovered youth crew through straight edge, Dennis sticked with Deviate. We 're just open minded kids trying to channel our positive feelings through music. We do not see it as an advantage, nor a disadvantage, but we like the idea of bringing some variation in the Belgian hardcore scene.



Animal Club does like the mosh. Opening a record with a fat, pounding intro track is always a good idea and so you did on the demo. What are hardcore's most effective intro tracks? Also, what's the dumbest and most irresponsible mosh move Animal Club evoked so far?

Mindwar - intro

Rival Mob - intro grunt

Blind Authority- intro

There is no such thing as a dumb mosh move, just do what comes up in mind, let's get wild.

Have you considered releasing the 2016 demo on a 7 inch format? I mean, there's some great tunes on it and you already have a really sweet piece of cover artwork for it... That would make a nice single EP, no? What were the most surprising responses to the demo so far? Are you satisfied with it yourself?

We've discussed that matter in the past with some record labels but since the lineup changed completely we don't feel the need to release the demo on vinyl at the moment. We will bring out new tunes soon and we want to focus on the present instead of focusing on the past. Sure we do still like the demo and everything around, but we hope people do like our new stuff as well.

Most of AC's lyrics are rather self-explanatory, but what's 'Carry on' about? What's an important source of inspiration for AC's lyrics?

Also: How do you avoid a preaching to the converted kinda thing? Let's put it to the test: could you give a concrete example of a hardcore song that lyrically influenced you to act/think in a different way?

Inspiration: society and personal interactions

The ideas of society are backed up by a huge amount of people, the majority. If a small amount of people have a different view or opinion, they will have to fight for these ideas. Those people are passionate about it and are willing to give everything for that cause. If we don't have those people, will there ever be a change and will tunnel vision ever stop?

Have Heart - Watch me Rise. The lyrics say it all.


I probably should have started with this question, but obviously I didn't. Still curious though, thus, why 'Animal Club'? I mean, of all possible clubs, why an animal club?
'Cause it sounds groovy, wild, fun and fuzzy.
So, Animal Clubbers, let's adopt some wildlife:
Jaguar (Jaguars) or eagle (Stop & Think)
We like both, but Jaguarz are way too underrated.
Gorillas (Gorilla Biscuits) or sheep (Minor Threat)
Difficult choice, Minor Threat is equally as good, but the Gorillas got the funk.
Underdog or Cadaver Dog
One of a kind, there is no other band like Underdog.
The bulldog (Victory records) or the bat (Alternative tentacles)
Shelter, Bad Brains and Integrity, what's more to say. We miss the old day of Victory records.



Even though AC is a rather young band, you already shared a stage with household names as Violent Reaction, Drug Control or Slapshot. Recently you played with Nations On Fire, Edward Goodlife's famed posi-band. What's more legendary: playing these shows or wrecking a small, shower room?

Shower rooms all the way. But actually we don't care as long as the vibe and energy is on point.

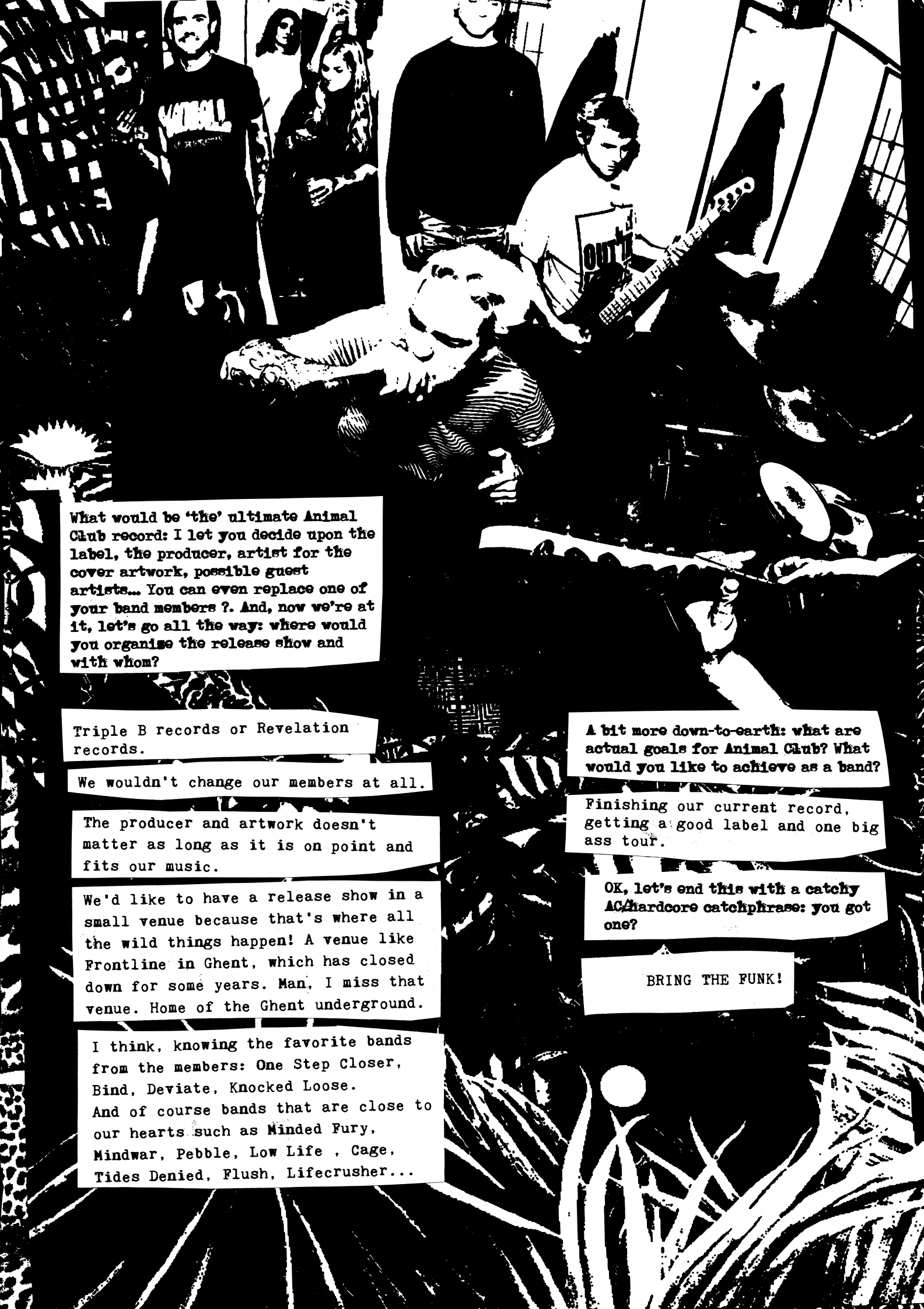
Could you share one or two exceptionally memorable show-related anecdotes from AC's band history?

We once had a situation where we arrived at the venue in Holland and we assumed that there was a backline, but there wasn't. Dennis asked Davy the day before and he said: 'yeah, sure' because he always assumes there's a backline if the promotors don't ask to bring one. Eventually we drove back to Belgium for the backline, returned and played 15 min later than scheduled.

Then there was that first time in Germany. There wasn't talked about a fee for playing the show so Davy went to the promotor after the show. The promotor said to him that he hasn't got much cash left from the show but that he was prepared to paypal a €50. Davy asked him how much cash there was still in his hands. He said €10, Davy told him that it was fine, turned around to us and said really convincing: '10 euros good right?!'

On a side note: Should we expect an AC LP on Good Life now?

Future labels are a mystery, but Kick out the Jams is a fact.



What would be 'the' ultimate Animal Club record: I let you decide upon the label, the producer, artist for the cover artwork, possible guest artists... You can even replace one of your band members ?. And, now we're at it, let's go all the way: where would you organise the release show and with whom?

Triple B records or Revelation records.

We wouldn't change our members at all.

The producer and artwork doesn't matter as long as it is on point and fits our music.

We'd like to have a release show in a small venue because that's where all the wild things happen! A venue like Frontline in Ghent, which has closed down for some years. Man, I miss that venue. Home of the Ghent underground.

I think, knowing the favorite bands from the members: One Step Closer, Bind, Deviate, Knocked Loose.
And of course bands that are close to our hearts such as Minded Fury, Mindwar, Pebble, Low Life , Cage, Tides Denied, Flush, Lifecrusher...

A bit more down-to-earth: what are actual goals for Animal Club? What would you like to achieve as a band?

Finishing our current record, getting a good label and one big ass tour.

OK, let's end this with a catchy AC/hardcore catchphrase: you got one?

BRING THE FUNK!





MAGGOT STOMP

"putting hair on the chests of posers since 2018"

interview with Scott Magrath



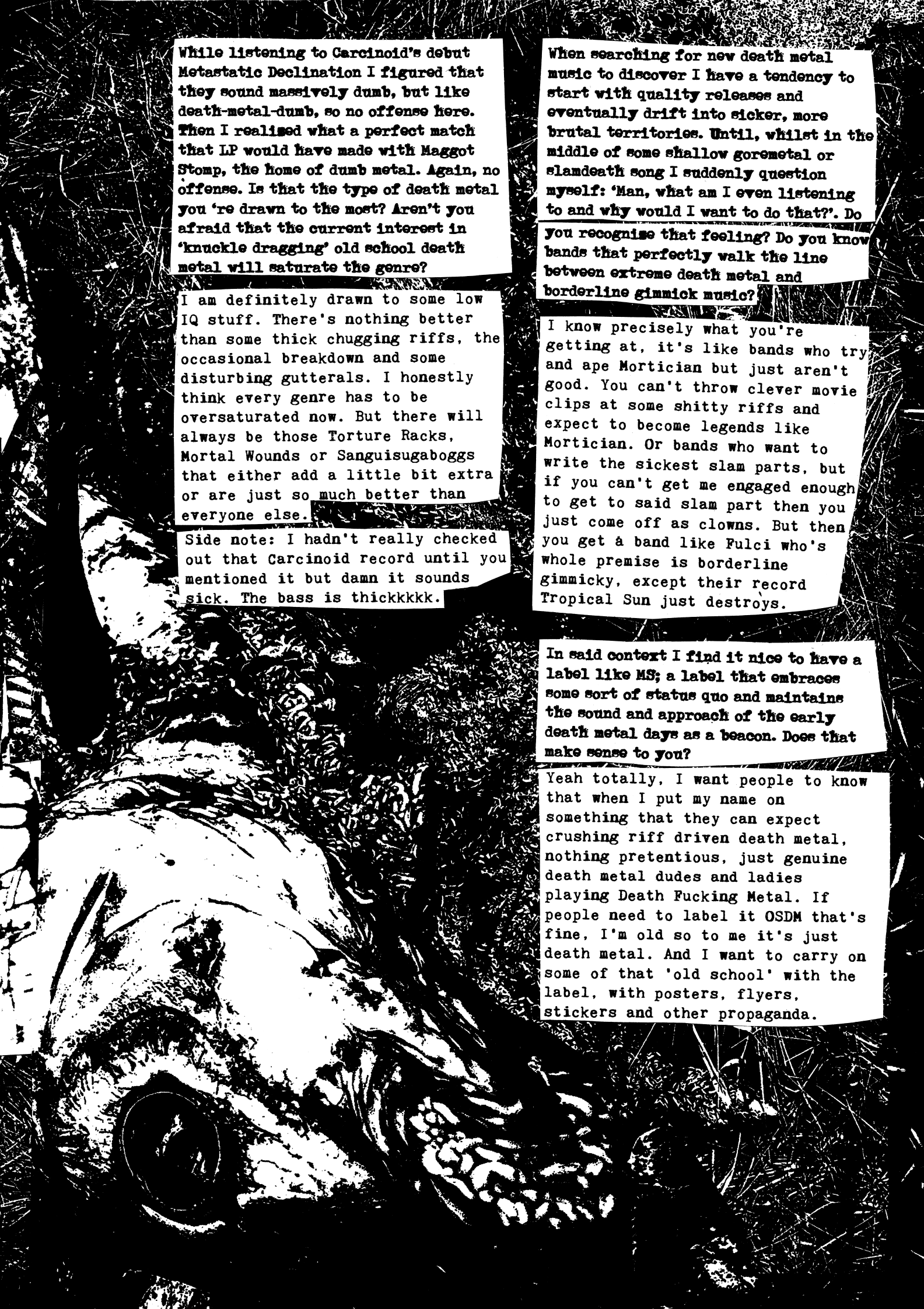
Something I really like about Maggot Stomp is the fact that the label radiates your enthusiasm for death metal. Not only by praising the music that you're releasing, but also because you dare to go for a tongue in cheek approach every now and then, making fun of a genre that is built upon a rather morbid imagery. Is that what's in it for you; the opportunity of being the dude yelling *'... is all good as long as I can steer my mean, mean death metal machine'*?

I just think people take themselves way too seriously. No one has any fun anymore and people go out of their way to be angry about shit that has zero effect on anything they do. If I put a line on an ad that says, "putting hair on the chests of posers since 2018", some people will get so worked up that they need to comment about it on Instagram/facebook or something. It's such a ridiculous statement, just laugh at it and move on. When I got into death metal it was still a new thing, all the bands were trying to out-gore each other, play faster than the last band or be more brutal. It was all in good fun. Then black metal came around and ruined everything. I feel bad for all those sad Norwegian kids.

What are some of the absolute highlights in the label's history so far, Maggot Stomp things that bring you a smile whenever you think about them?

Honestly the biggest highlight for me is the amount of support that comes from places that I would never expect it to come from. Frank Rini from Internal Bleeding naming us his favorite label of 2019 was a personal highlight. I saw those dudes a few times opening for Immolation and Six Feet Under when Voracious Contempt came out. They quickly became one of my favorite bands at the time.

As far as things we've accomplished, every time I listen to the Gutless demo I get so stoked that they asked if I would be willing to put it out, I love those songs. The little Night of Death we did back in July was a personal highlight, Church of Disgust coming out here (Los Angeles) from FL/TX to play was amazing. Doing the Malignant Altar stuff also makes me smile, not only was I a huge fan of Insect Warfare, but I talk with Beau almost daily now and it's kind of cool to be honest.



While listening to Carcinoid's debut Metastatic Declination I figured that they sound massively dumb, but like death-metal-dumb, so no offense here. Then I realised what a perfect match that LP would have made with Maggot Stomp, the home of dumb metal. Again, no offense. Is that the type of death metal you 're drawn to the most? Aren't you afraid that the current interest in 'knuckle dragging' old school death metal will saturate the genre?

I am definitely drawn to some low IQ stuff. There's nothing better than some thick chugging riffs, the occasional breakdown and some disturbing gutterals. I honestly think every genre has to be oversaturated now. But there will always be those Torture Racks, Mortal Wounds or Sanguisugaboggs that either add a little bit extra or are just so much better than everyone else.

Side note: I hadn't really checked out that Carcinoid record until you mentioned it but damn it sounds sick. The bass is thickkkkk.

When searching for new death metal music to discover I have a tendency to start with quality releases and eventually drift into sicker, more brutal territories. Until, whilst in the middle of some shallow goremetal or slamdeath song I suddenly question myself: 'Man, what am I even listening to and why would I want to do that?'. Do you recognise that feeling? Do you know bands that perfectly walk the line between extreme death metal and borderline gimmick music?

I know precisely what you're getting at, it's like bands who try and ape Mortician but just aren't good. You can't throw clever movie clips at some shitty riffs and expect to become legends like Mortician. Or bands who want to write the sickest slam parts, but if you can't get me engaged enough to get to said slam part then you just come off as clowns. But then you get a band like Fulci who's whole premise is borderline gimmicky, except their record Tropical Sun just destroys.

In said context I find it nice to have a label like MS; a label that embraces some sort of status quo and maintains the sound and approach of the early death metal days as a beacon. Does that make sense to you?

Yeah totally, I want people to know that when I put my name on something that they can expect crushing riff driven death metal, nothing pretentious, just genuine death metal dudes and ladies playing Death Fucking Metal. If people need to label it OSDM that's fine, I'm old so to me it's just death metal. And I want to carry on some of that 'old school' with the label, with posters, flyers, stickers and other propaganda.



Indeed, a lot of the MS flyers and promo stuff have some sort of a retro feel. Not in a trendy, fashionable way, but more like having that 'authentic' underground touch. They sometimes remind me of those days when you bought records based upon one-liner descriptions in paper catalogues...

I assume you've bought your share of records from those paper catalogues as well. The plus side was that you sometimes ended up with a great, unexpected surprise, the down side was, well, simply buying utter crap. Can you remember an example of both?

I've bought so many records over the years lots of hardcore and death metal stuff. The bad stuff was probably some mediocre hardcore record. But I did get some great demos in the mail from bands like Repudilation and Rotting from Canada thanks to publications like Sounds of Death.

It's especially funny to see you taking that practice of those short descriptions one step further by citing 'one-liners' taken from social media. What does one have to do to have his or her comment used as a MS promo phrase?

I love reading the comments people leave on bandcamp or youtube. I think all that stuff is fair game. I'd rather use something someone wrote on bandcamp to promote a record than what gets written in Decibel. Not that we get much traction in Decibel so I guess it's a necessity to use fan comments whether they're good or bad. My favorite quote right now is the one I'm using for the Sanguisguabogg "hype" sticker. Some exec at one of those 'big' metal labels described their music as being heavy without memorable songs or personality, this is coming from a label who puts out shit from Backyard Babies, The Alligator Wine and Chris Jericho's shitty band Fozzy. And don't get me started on their terrible merch.



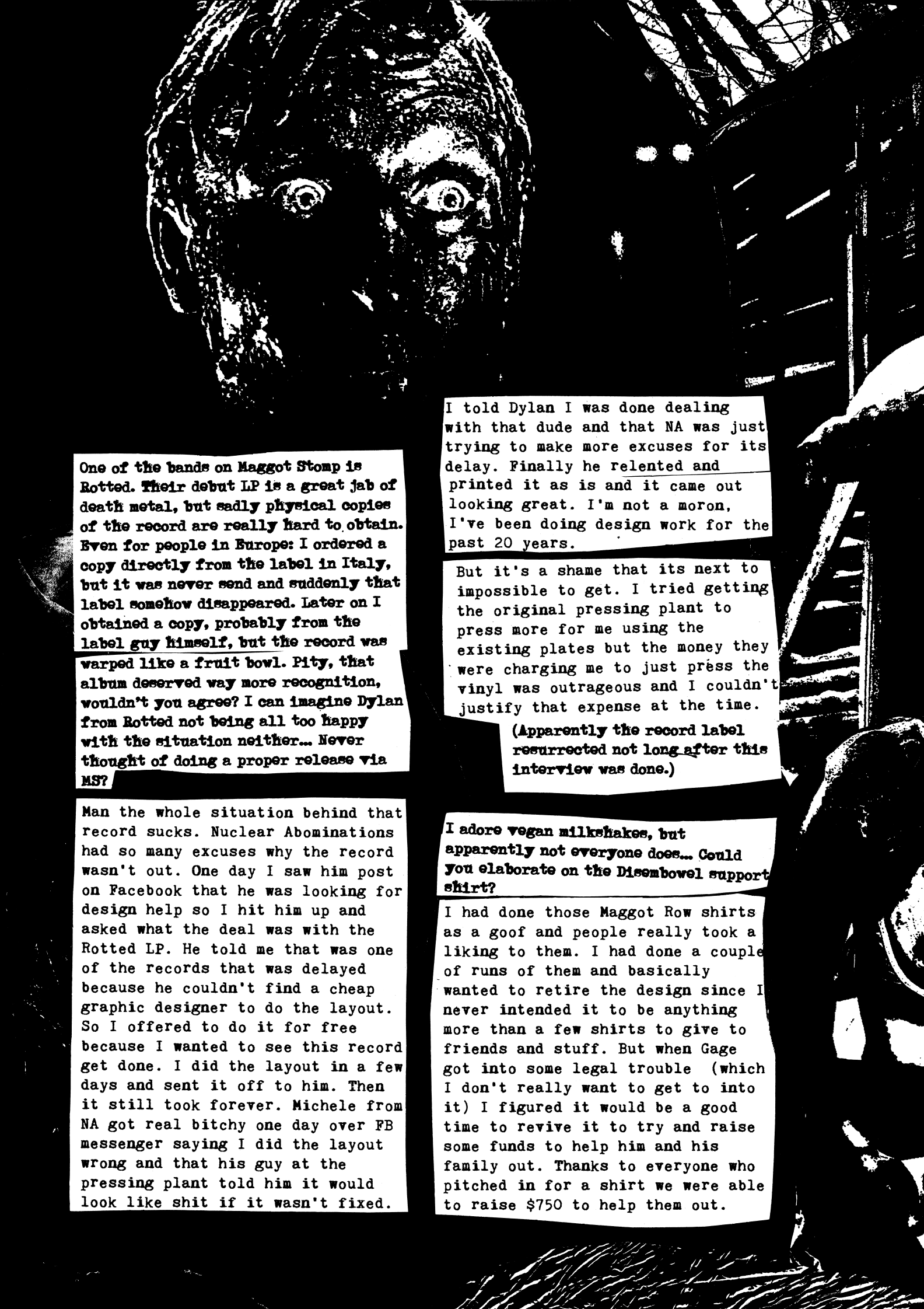
Let's address the Pinhead in you. First of all, what motivated you to start making pins? Death metal is of course an ideal genre for pins: not just because people tend to actually wear them, but also because of the images that received somewhat of a cult status... I'm thinking about the Repulsion head, Death's Leprosy guy, that Suffocation worm (half croissant, half alien), the Cannibal Corpse fetus... You think there are some newer images that could receive the same status over time as aforementioned?

I wouldn't really consider myself a 'pinhead', I've always been a collector of stuff and there were some pins that I bought that I saw on Instagram or something and when I couldn't find a cool Morbid Angel pin I just decided to just make one myself. I thought the crucified image on cover of the Thy Kingdom Come demo and the Helga head from the Repulsion demo would make cool pins. So I got them made and my buddy Larry asked what I was going to do with all of them since I had to make 100. He suggested I make a bigcartel page and try and sell the extras. That's kind of how this ball got rolling.

I always tried making pins that were based on iconic imagery, some were a bit more obscure than others but those that got the references or knew where the images came from were stoked. We did a pin of the "Larry" mascot for Blood Incantation. I think that will eventually reach that iconic status.

Never felt like creating your own Maggot Stomp 'mascot' (apart from the Death Row dude)? What would be appropriate?

I've toyed with the idea of creating some sort of 'mascot'. I have a friend helping me mold my thoughts into something tangible. I hope 2020 it'll take shape and become a reality.



One of the bands on Maggot Stomp is Rotted. Their debut LP is a great jab of death metal, but sadly physical copies of the record are really hard to obtain. Even for people in Europe: I ordered a copy directly from the label in Italy, but it was never send and suddenly that label somehow disappeared. Later on I obtained a copy, probably from the label guy himself, but the record was warped like a fruit bowl. Pity, that album deserved way more recognition, wouldn't you agree? I can imagine Dylan from Rotted not being all too happy with the situation neither... Never thought of doing a proper release via MS?

Man the whole situation behind that record sucks. Nuclear Abominations had so many excuses why the record wasn't out. One day I saw him post on Facebook that he was looking for design help so I hit him up and asked what the deal was with the Rotted LP. He told me that was one of the records that was delayed because he couldn't find a cheap graphic designer to do the layout. So I offered to do it for free because I wanted to see this record get done. I did the layout in a few days and sent it off to him. Then it still took forever. Michele from NA got real bitchy one day over FB messenger saying I did the layout wrong and that his guy at the pressing plant told him it would look like shit if it wasn't fixed.

I told Dylan I was done dealing with that dude and that NA was just trying to make more excuses for its delay. Finally he relented and printed it as is and it came out looking great. I'm not a moron, I've been doing design work for the past 20 years.

But it's a shame that its next to impossible to get. I tried getting the original pressing plant to press more for me using the existing plates but the money they were charging me to just press the vinyl was outrageous and I couldn't justify that expense at the time.

(Apparently the record label resurrected not long after this interview was done.)

I adore vegan milkshakes, but apparently not everyone does... Could you elaborate on the Disembowel support shirt?

I had done those Maggot Row shirts as a goof and people really took a liking to them. I had done a couple of runs of them and basically wanted to retire the design since I never intended it to be anything more than a few shirts to give to friends and stuff. But when Gage got into some legal trouble (which I don't really want to get to into it) I figured it would be a good time to revive it to try and raise some funds to help him and his family out. Thanks to everyone who pitched in for a shirt we were able to raise $750 to help them out.



Speaking of Disembowel; I think I read somewhere that releasing a record of theirs was one of the early objectives for the label. Any news on that release? What makes their sound (or that band in general) stand out for you personally?

I first discovered Disembowel when I ordered the demo from the mighty Headsplit Records. It came with these hand drawn promo flyers the band made and it was just crude enough to strike that nostalgic chord in me. They were precisely the kind of band I wanted to work with. Dirty death metal with a touch of punk attitude, it's a perfect combo. Their debut LP, Echoes of Terror, should be out in the spring of 2020.

Maggot Stomp isn't your first label; prior to it there was TakeOut Records upon which you released the first Terror single (amongst others). Did it surprise you that they became such a 'big' hardcore band? Do you feel like there's a difference between running a hardcore label and death metal label?

I started Takeover Records with a friend to put out a 7" for our friends in Piece By Piece. The Terror 7" was our second release. Iwas good friends with Todd Jones who started Terror with Scott Vogel, Matt Smith and my friend Nick who also sang in Piece By Piece. Todd asked if I would put out the 7" because they were going on tour and wanted something to sell besides the demo CDr they had out. I knew they were on their way to big things but to see them still doing it this many years later is crazy. Nonstop hardwork can get you a long way.

I don't think there is that big of a difference between doing a HC label vs a DM label. I used to think HC labels could get away with doing tons of colored vinyl variants and collector's would eat it up but lately with the volume of records some of the 'bigger' metal labels are pressing it seems like DM kids are just as big into collecting their favorite records.

Were there relevant lessons you learned from the TakeOut time, that come in handy now when running MS?

One thing I learned doing Takeover Records was not to let it consume you and not to get burned out doing the label. It's hard not to think about Maggot Stomp shit 24/7, I'm always behind on mail-order, I'm always trying to make new flyers. Constantly trying to engage with people through social media, answering emails. It all takes a toll and it's easy to get frustrated and burnt out. So when I start feeling frustrated and overwhelmed I like to just step away for a day and focus on other shit like coffee or motorcycles and just clear out the old brain cache.



MS operates from California, but you spend your younger years on the East Coast. You were active in the hardcore scene back then. What's the most memorable show you've seen during that period? Also: Can you tell us a story from that time that you will never forget?

I went to a lot of shows in the early 90s, mainly in New Haven CT and train rides into NYC. The most memorable was the first show I ever went to which was Sick of It All, Raw Deal, Screeching Weasel & Sponge Tunnel at the University of Connecticut Student Union Ballroom in December of '88. A friend of mine picked me up in his VW thing which was essentially a metal box on wheels. No heat, basically no windows, we froze for the 30 or so minutes it took to get there. Sponge Tunnel and Screeching Weasel were too 'punk' for me to give a shit about back then. Raw Deal was so sick, Anthony the singer had this vein running down this middle of his forehead, it looked like a garden hose that was about to burst. And Sick of it All were so intense. During Pete's Sake someone stage dove and landed right on top of me, my glasses hit the floor and were trashed in an instant. Gorilla Biscuits were supposed to play but ended up not showing up, regardless I went home feeling so stoked on the whole show. My mom was pissed and told me I was never going to a show again.



Were (or are) you the guy behind the Worm food zine? I was a bit late to the party so I couldn't find a copy anymore, but based upon the promo pictures I saw it looked really nice! Do you think there's still place for that type of fanzines in the underground music scene? What makes a good fanzine?

I did two issues of Worm Food so far, I hope to do another issue soon if time allows. Zines are great for anyone who needs some sort of creative outlet or a place to express themselves. As long as there is a healthy underground with creative individuals with a desire to express an opinion, zines will remain relevant. Good fanzines need to feel authentic and have a personality. Fanzines can look slick with great design but if they don't have any personality or have nothing to say then they're really nothing more than waste of paper.

OK, let's end the interview on a melodic note. You can choose the Maggot Stomp theme song, but it cannot be a death metal (or related) tune. What will we hear?

Probably the Garbage Truck song by Blippi. You can find it on YouTube



SHARK ATTACK

"We always pulled from the 80-85 era for our inspiration. We may have progressed a little to include 84-85."

interview with Matt Smith

band pictures by CallxMexKiller

'Shark Attack' always sounded like a great name for a hardcore band to me. Is it a reference to Wehrmacht? I'm inclined to think none of you guys has been attacked by a shark before, but what's the craziest wild life encounter (one of) you experienced?

Man, I had to look that up but no, not a reference to Wehrmacht. Haha. Honestly we just made a list of names and that one kind of popped out as something that could have cool imagery associated with it and maybe some cool shark metaphors in the lyrics. No one was ever attacked by a shark though we did try to float a rumor that our first drummer had been eaten by a shark while surfing an Florida! Haha (love you Rich!!) the rumor never caught on though.

One time back in 2000 I was grabbing my guitar from Zach's parents garage where we rehearsed (Zach was still in high school when we started as he was only 16). His mom sicced their pitbull on me. I guess she thought I was a burglar or something. She later claimed she thought I was Zach's friend Nate Helm (one time Violent Minds/American Nightmare drummer). I guess she thought it'd be funny. At the time, I wasn't really amused.



Shark Attack is around for almost 20 years now... Regardless the tunes the band actually plays, its lifespan alone makes Shark Attack very old school. What is it that keeps you motivated to play and listen to those short, energetic musical outbursts? What keeps you hardcore?

Well, to clarify, we were a band from October 2001 through June 2002 and then we broke up. We played a couple reunion shows in 2005 and then nothing until 2018 . We all did other bands after Shark Attack. Zach and Matt did Violent Minds. Zach also played in No Warning for a bit. I played in Knife Fight and I was also in the original line up of Terror. After the first US tour with Terror I moved back to the east coast and went back to college. I didn't play in another hardcore band until 2015 when I started a band with some friends called Nation of Wolves. That sort of got the ball rolling for me again. We played a bunch of Philly shows and got to share the stage with Youth of Today at This is Hardcore. That was a blast and I realized how much I missed it. Afterwards people started asking about SA but we really hadn't spoken much in recent years. Eventually our Friend Dave from Six Feet Under approached us about doing the discography on vinyl and he also threw out the idea of playing United Blood fest in Richmond. He kind of orchestrated the whole reunion.

As for playing hardcore, there is really no better way for me to express myself then a one minute or less cut-throat hardcore song. Even when I wasn't playing in a band I always listened to bands like Negative Approach and Bad Brains when I worked out. It gets me hyped. It's in my blood I suppose.

You already mentioned it: it's not just a rad band name, it also lends itself for some great artwork. You worked with Linas Garsys (brutal) and Mike Bukowski before, and now you have Spoiler who did the artwork for the 2019 European tour merch. That's setting high standards! Who's to credit for picking these talented illustrators?

We love collaborating with artists. Linas is an old friend of ours from way back. He drew our logo as well as the cd cover for the Reflections Records discography. He did a bunch of shirts too including the United Blood reunion shirt in 2018. Mike Bukowski did the 7" cover. I don't think he had done much prior to us but he's worked with a lot of bands afterwards.

Spoiler did our shirt for the 2005 reunion (grim reaper design). We've also worked with Billy from Side By Side who famously drew the GB gorilla. He did a skinhead shark shirt that we sold at Sound Of Revolution. Mick Lambrou did the angry mob shirt we sold at TIHC. That's one of my favorites. He also did the latest Slapshot LP cover. Another one we worked with is Kevin Crowley of the mighty NYHC band the Abused. He did a surfer shark in front of some nuclear reactors. That was the cover for the United blood pressing we sold at the fest and we had shirts too. Artwork is such a huge part of hardcore so we really spend a lot of time figuring out artists who will fit with us.

What are the most inspiring pieces of (visual) hardcore artwork according to you (as a fan of the genre)?

As for art I like? Definitely Pushead. He's still on our list of people to work with. We've actually talked to him and he is down to work with us but timing hasn't worked out. I love the Get It Away cover he did for SSD. I also love Sean Taggart's artwork for Cause For Alarm (and the new cover for Get Loud too!) I'm also a huge design nerd so I gotta say all the early Dischord Records stuff looked rad. SSD Kids is one of my all-time favorite layouts. That cover photo with the black sky is so sick. All the old Plan 9 stuff looked so cool. Basically that cut and paste look is what I'm drawn to. The 90's/00's label Youth Attack did a great job of replicating that style. I always liked their layouts.





Besides the regular editions SA releases often come in more limited variations: I already mentioned Spoiler's edition of the discography, but there's a more Gorilla Biscuits styled variant as well. There are the Matt Summer takes on the Blood In The Water 7", the real blood test presses, the fancy colors... Do we have a record collector in the band?

Me and summers were big time collectors. Sadly we both parted ways with a lot over the years. Dave, our current bassist and six feet under label owner is a huge collector. So yeah we like making weird covers and various colored vinyl pressings. The blood covers were Dave's idea. He's basically a vegan too. So are me and Zach and Summers is a strict Vegetarian. So when he did those sleeves we were all like WTF!!?? But the reality is you can walk into any grocery store with a foreign section and buy a pint of blood for cooking. I think it makes a very interesting observation about our society. No one bats an eyelash at bands that have meat eaters. No one cares when bands wear leather shoes. But print a record cover with blood? People got all uptight about it. Why? Animals are a commodity in our culture. It's absolutely no different than if a record came in a limited suede or leather sleeve. Or of a band sold jackets with leather sleeves (well GB took some heat for it). But yeah that's where our society is. Leather and meat are just things to buy and consume and even though we know where they come from, it's easy to ignore the fact that they were once a life. Blood is different. It's carnal, violent and disturbing- but every bit as available off-the-shelf as leather and meat. Anyway that's my rant on that.

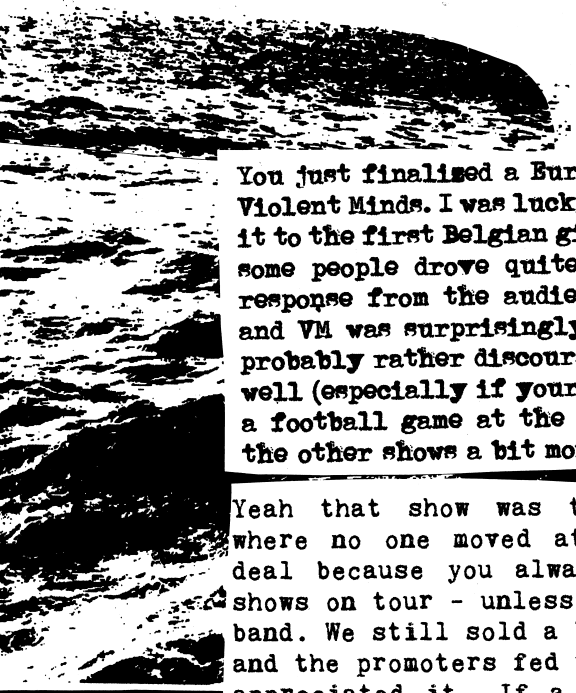
Go vegan!

The Shark Attack discography was released on vinyl via Six Feet Under records. Why was it released on wax just now and why did you opt for Six Feet Under (instead of Bridge 9 for example)?

Dave is an old friend and he's local. We love Chris but B9 hadn't really seemed interested in the back catalogue and Dave did. He also resurrected the band and ended up playing bass moving Zach over to second guitar cuz he's such a shredder. Dave was originally asked to play in Shark Attack way back but he was also in The Boils, Damage and a bunch of other bands at the time. He's been instrumental in getting the band shows in Europe.

Most record collectors have peculiar stories about attaining this or that release. One of those you can share with us?

One time I got wind of a record store in south jersey that had a bunch of old NYHC and DC hardcore Records up on the wall. I called the guy and he said prices were 5-30 bucks. He mentioned Minor Threat and Urban Waste and I knew I struck gold. Problem was I wanted to tell my room mates who were also collectors but I didn't want them buying anything I wanted. I told them I knew of a store with sick records and they could either come with me, but I got to go through all their records first to see if they had anything I wanted and if so, they'd have to relinquish them to me - OR I'd just go by myself and tell them where the store was after I cleaned it out. They both agreed reluctantly. I bought In My Eyes 7", Urban Waste, Crucial T, Negative Approach Tied Down first press and maybe a dozen other classic records that day. I think my room mates still made out with a bunch of stuff I either already had or wasn't interested in. I think Robby got an original Plan 9 Halloween poster that day.



You just finalised a European tour with Violent Minds. I was lucky enough to make it to the first Belgian gig... Even though some people drove quite a distance the response from the audience for both SA and VM was surprisingly tame. That was probably rather discouraging for you as well (especially if your team is playing a football game at the same time)? Were the other shows a bit more dynamic?



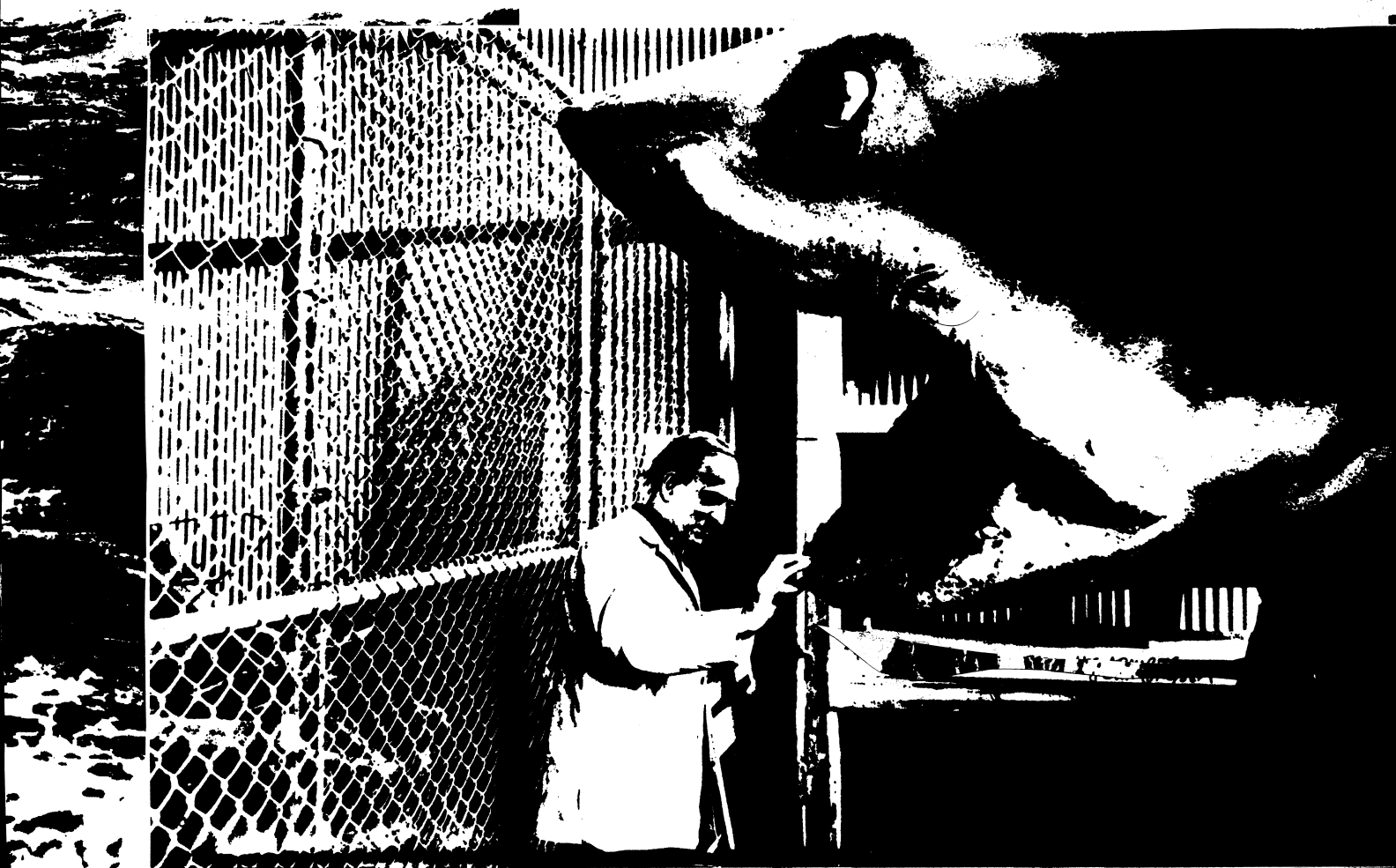
Yeah that show was the only show where no one moved at all. No big deal because you always have those shows on tour - unless you're a huge band. We still sold a bunch of stuff and the promoters fed us well and we appreciated it. If a crowd doesn't want to move that's on them but I thought we brought the heat anyway. Yeah the Eagles ended up losing that game so maybe that whole day just had bad cosmic energy.



London was a great show for us. We had a great response. Dresden too. Plus playing with Judge was a dream come true. For Violent Minds, the Antwerp show was sick. People were super into it. The tour was so much fun. I'm so happy we finally got to do that. It was one of my biggest regrets in life that we never toured Europe in the early 00's.

What are some of the best memories from this tour you're gladly going to take home?

Going out to dinner with Porcell and talking about the Abused for like an hour was a highlight for me cuz I'm a huge nerd. Berlin was super fun too. The Cortex guys are super cool and I had a great conversation with them. Plus earlier that day the whole band got tattoos so that was awesome. Mostly just spending time with my old friends is what makes SA still fun. Love those guys.





I noticed you were around to check out all the early bands playing that first Belgian show. That's pretty cool and supportive (since, honestly, it's not always as rewarding to do so from a musical point of view). Do you still feel an urge to discover new hardcore tunes or are you satisfied with focusing on the more classic HC canon? Some younger bands that caught your attention lately (not necessarily via the tour)?



Yeah I always like to see who we are playing with. Mindwar were cool, they had kind of a Blackout records style of hardcore. We played in Hamburg with this band Hypocrite, and they ended up being some dudes we knew from back home who live in Copenhagen now. That was a fun surprise. HAEMERS was my favorite of the tour. They are so sick. Instructor had a late 80's NYHC Sound which was cool.

As for newer bands I'm always late on everyone but in recent years I really liked Blind Justice from NJ. I LOVED Blood Pressure from Pittsburgh. Concealed Blade too, in fact Beach Impediment Records has a lot of cool stuff like Warthog. I really loved the GLOSS demo and I'm sad they broke up so quickly. They were so good. Wall Breaker from NJ are really cool. Lot of cool stuff that's out there. Being a dad and a business owner, I don't have my finger on the pulse anymore but I do check out lots of new stuff when I can. Fixation from Philly are cool. Yeah lots of new stuff is great. I do love the classic 80-83 the best though.



I saw Matt Summers has the Thou Shall Not Kill artwork tattooed, and there's of course the Foreign Job Lot cover (why that track). How important is Antidote for you and for hardcore in general?

Antidote TSNK is in my top 3 hardcore 7"s of all time. Right up there with Negative Approach and Poison Idea

Pick Your King. I can't tell you how important Antidote was to Shark Attack when we formed. We tried so hard to sound like them although I don't think we really do, sadly. Foreign Job lot has one of the greatest mosh parts ever written. I think we thought it was kinda funny to poke the eyes of the overly PC culture of the hardcore scene in 2000. That being said those lyrics don't work as well in today's political climate. I know when they wrote that song it was different times, and while not very PC, it was a reflection of the struggles of living in a bleak NYC during the early 80's. Now people look for lyrics like that to validate their own twisted views and that's fucked up. I'll let those guys talk about their words since you're interviewing them anyway. We now cover Something Must Be Done, cuz that's another ripper. We even had Louie Rivera (original Antidote Singer) get up and sing it with us in NYC. Dream come true.

The set I heard contained an exciting new song. May we expect some new material from Shark Attack somewhere in the near future? Could you already give us a little bit of info on this: will it be a good old SA release or should we expect some new elements or influences?

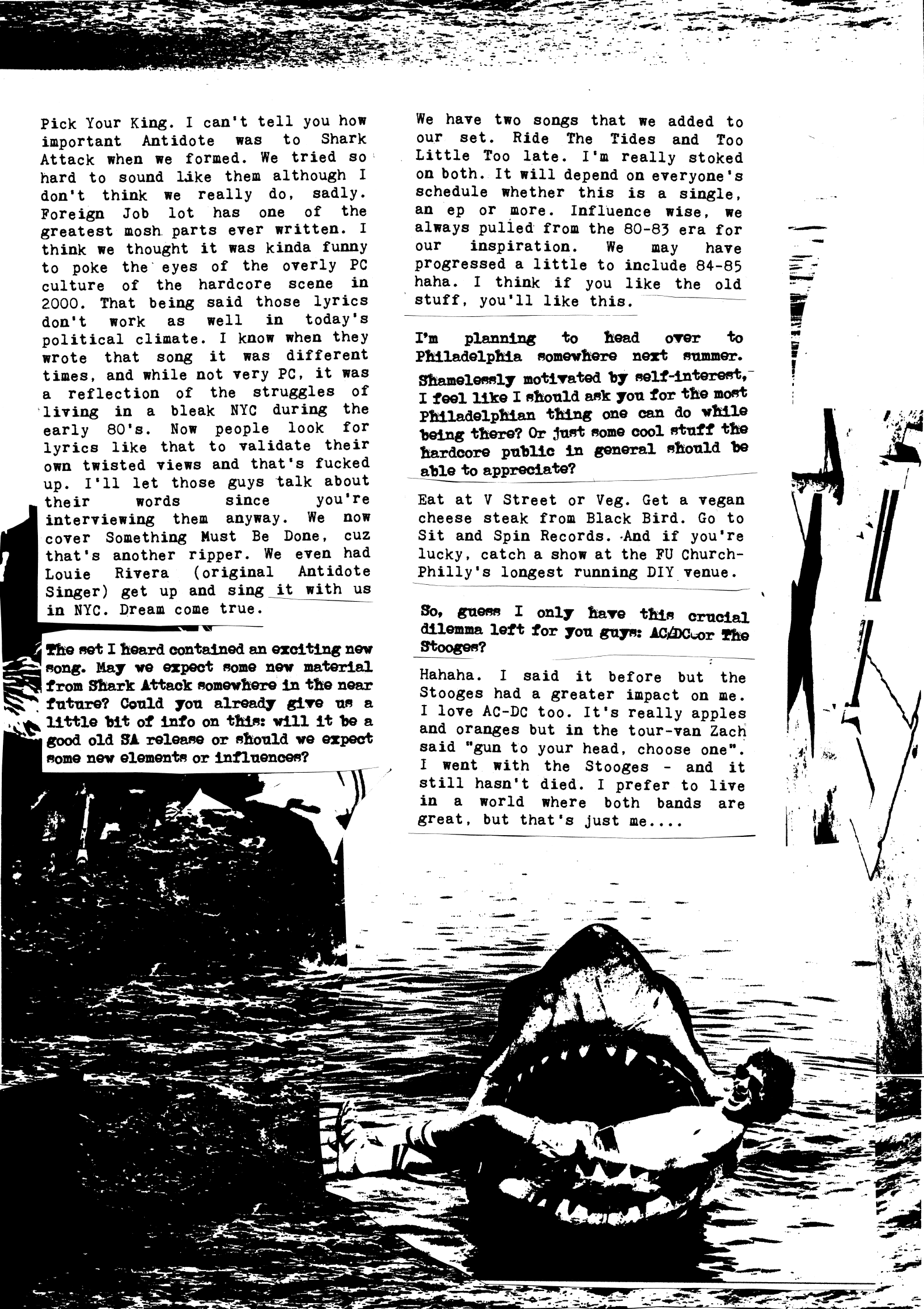
We have two songs that we added to our set. Ride The Tides and Too Little Too late. I'm really stoked on both. It will depend on everyone's schedule whether this is a single, an ep or more. Influence wise, we always pulled from the 80-83 era for our inspiration. We may have progressed a little to include 84-85 haha. I think if you like the old stuff, you'll like this.

I'm planning to head over to Philadelphia somewhere next summer. Shamelessly motivated by self-interest, I feel like I should ask you for the most Philadelphian thing one can do while being there? Or just some cool stuff the hardcore public in general should be able to appreciate?

Eat at V Street or Veg. Get a vegan cheese steak from Black Bird. Go to Sit and Spin Records. And if you're lucky, catch a show at the FU Church-Philly's longest running DIY venue.

So, guess I only have this crucial dilemma left for you guys: AC/DC or The Stooges?

Hahaha. I said it before but the Stooges had a greater impact on me. I love AC-DC too. It's really apples and oranges but in the tour-van Zach said "gun to your head, choose one". I went with the Stooges - and it still hasn't died. I prefer to live in a world where both bands are great, but that's just me....



Ghent

Liar. Death to false metal.


LON DON
SPOILER
"NO DANCING, NO REQUESTS"

Let's do some jukebox picking for a starter. I selected a few songs. Could you give them a listen and just write down whatever comes to mind?

Reagan Youth: Jesus Was a Communist (Vol. II)

Reagan Youth were one of the greatest bands to ever exist, but I never got into this second album that much. I like that they took this weirdo direction and bummed out all the skinheads who had no choice but to respect them, but that doesn't mean I wanna sit here and listen to the album.

Spine: Unraveled (Time Has Gone LP)

This is better than I expected it to be. Not something I'm gonna listen to a lot, but 18 year old me is moshing.

Krimewatch: 平和の夢 (First song on the self-titled LP; hard not to think about the Straight Edge Revenge song...)

Good band, can't really get into the recording quality. I don't think it sounds like the Project X song much, if anything it reminds me of early Agnostic Front.

Perverted Ceremony: Whips of impurity (Sabbat Of Behemaël LP)

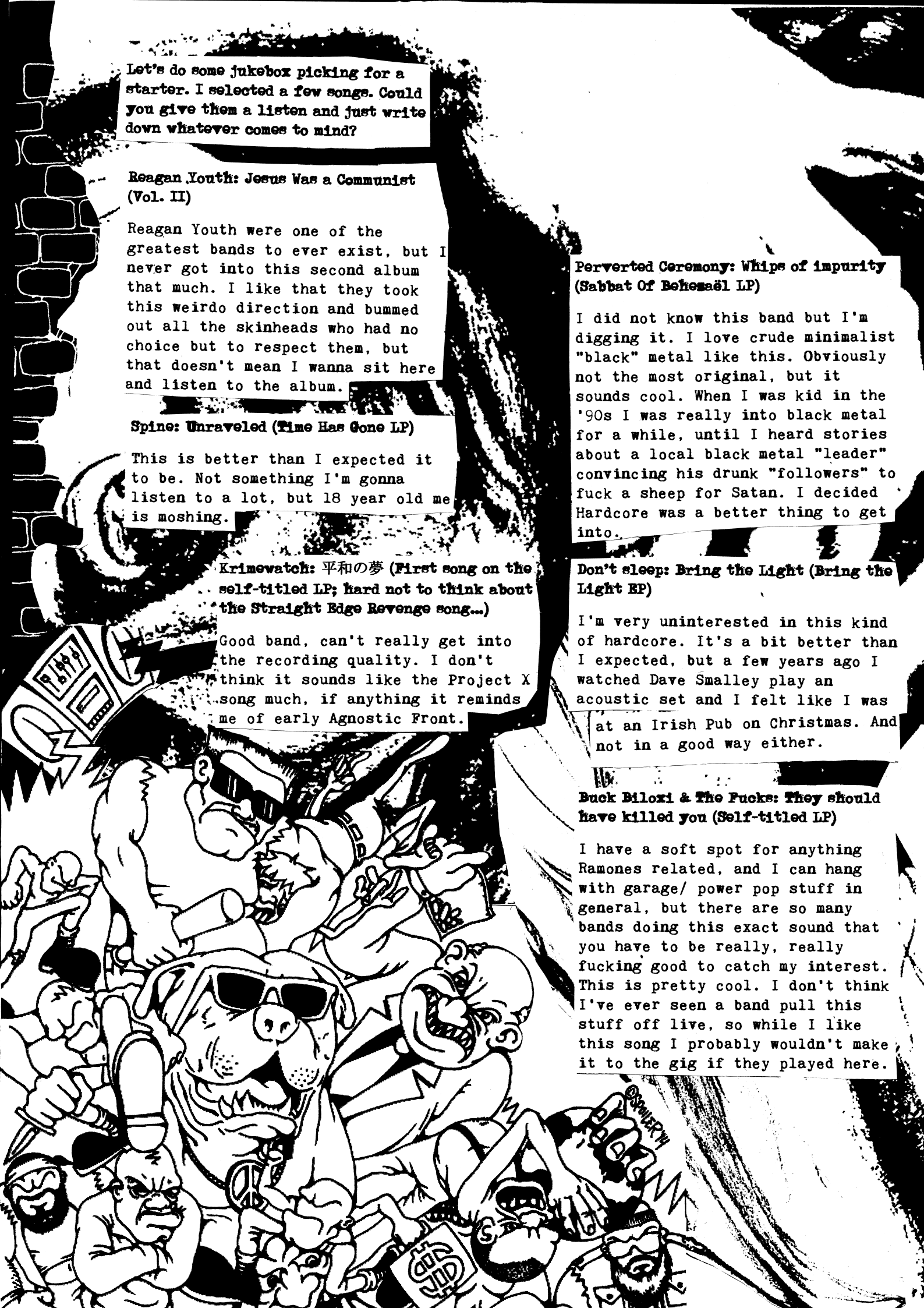
I did not know this band but I'm digging it. I love crude minimalist "black" metal like this. Obviously not the most original, but it sounds cool. When I was kid in the '90s I was really into black metal for a while, until I heard stories about a local black metal "leader" convincing his drunk "followers" to fuck a sheep for Satan. I decided Hardcore was a better thing to get into.

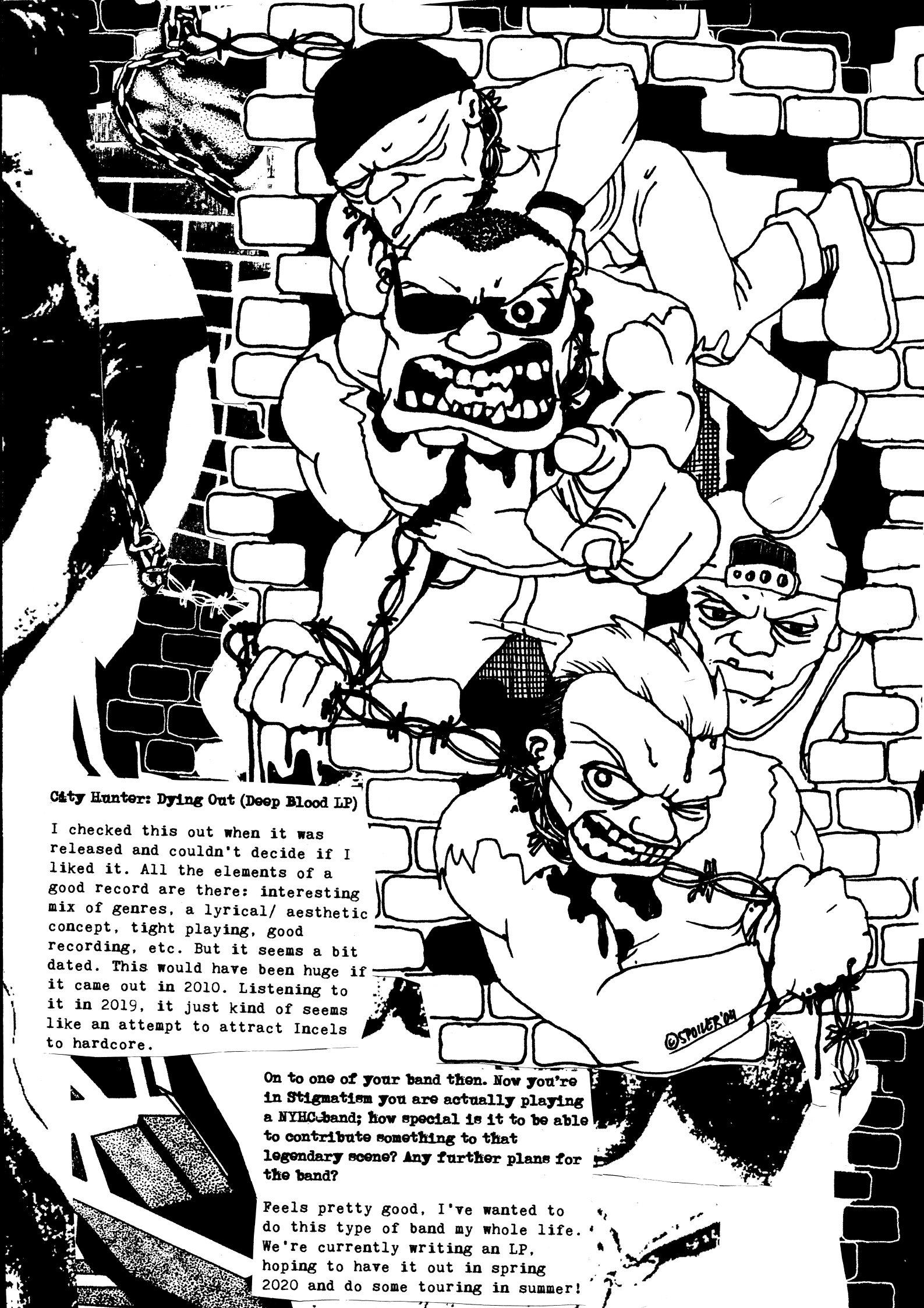
Don't sleep: Bring the Light (Bring the Light EP)

I'm very uninterested in this kind of hardcore. It's a bit better than I expected, but a few years ago I watched Dave Smalley play an acoustic set and I felt like I was at an Irish Pub on Christmas. And not in a good way either.

Buck Biloxi & The Fucks: They should have killed you (Self-titled LP)

I have a soft spot for anything Ramones related, and I can hang with garage/ power pop stuff in general, but there are so many bands doing this exact sound that you have to be really, really fucking good to catch my interest. This is pretty cool. I don't think I've ever seen a band pull this stuff off live, so while I like this song I probably wouldn't make it to the gig if they played here.





City Hunter: Dying Out (Deep Blood LP)

I checked this out when it was released and couldn't decide if I liked it. All the elements of a good record are there: interesting mix of genres, a lyrical/ aesthetic concept, tight playing, good recording, etc. But it seems a bit dated. This would have been huge if it came out in 2010. Listening to it in 2019, it just kind of seems like an attempt to attract Incels to hardcore.

On to one of your band then. Now you're in Stigmatism you are actually playing a NYHC-band; how special is it to be able to contribute something to that legendary scene? Any further plans for the band?

Feels pretty good, I've wanted to do this type of band my whole life. We're currently writing an LP, hoping to have it out in spring 2020 and do some touring in summer!



There's that famous Whitehead quote stating that the European philosophical tradition could be considered as a series of footnotes to Plato. Paraphrasing this: you believe it makes sense to consider the NYHC as a series of footnotes to Agnostic Front? A band called 'Stigmatism' is kinda backing this idea...

Well no, because NYHC existed before Agnostic Front. But Stigmatism is very obviously a footnote to Vinnie Stigma. It's funny, when we started the band we were actually aiming to sound like Madball's "Ball of Destruction" way more than early AF. Same songs, but with a tight drummer. No one could ever attempt to play drums like Raybeez or Dave Jones. It can't be done.

While going through an online distro catalogue I noticed Impotentie's 'Vijf Nummers tegen De Oorlog' EP. Never expected to stumble upon a portrait of Jommeke in a foreign hardcore bin and I was even more surprised when noticing that it concerned a Montreal based band... It makes more sense now I know you're involved, but still... Why Jommeke? Of all comic book personae, he must be one with the least hardcore appeal ever (although picturing him baldheaded does give him an old school skinhead allure).

Since a lot of the Impotentie lyrics speak against rising fascism, warfare, and conservative life in Belgium, I thought it would be funny to use Jommeke in the most cynical way possible. Since he looks very wholesome but also very Aryan, to have him giving the thumbs up to the nuclear explosion that's behind him really sums up the lyrics effectively. It's like classic punk album using war imagery they were against, but with a sarcastic twist that only a Flemish person would understand.

You were part of Justice around 2003-2005. Quite an exciting time for Belgian hardcore back then... Of course there was Dead Stop, but more was going on: The Deal played great shows as well, out of nowhere these cool looking demo tapes from Justice and Rise & Fall appeared, great zines were glued together and on a more international level you had these strong labels like Bridge 9/Reflections, My War, Deranged or Lockin' Out providing other solid material. Hardcore (instead of metalcore) certainly had its thing going in Belgium. Looking back on all this: what were the three defining moments for you during that period of HC in Belgium?

It was an amazing time to be involved in Hardcore. The three defining moments would have to be any time Dead Stop played the Lintfabriek (they've all melted into one memory), the first time Justice played after we put out a demo and everyone went nuts, and the third moment is a tie between the last The Deal show (that's when it all began) or the first time we heard Restless Youth play "Suffocate" before it was recorded and we all instinctively moshed.

We now have these H8000 reunion shows with bands like Regression, Nations on Fire, Liar and Sektor playing the buhne again. Is it thinkable that we'll ever see another Dead Stop/Justice gig?

It seems like eventually, everyone does a reunion. I spent most of my life thinking Mike Judge would never break, but look where that got me. It's all on Lino now. Reunions are like the new edge break. Don't do it Lino! Never break! Justice has already done many reunions, so I don't think it's out of the question we'll see them again.

It's probably no secret to you that two Justice records are mentioned in Tony Rettman's canon of essential SxE records (in his 2017 book 'Straight Edge'). I never considered Justice as an in your face SxE band... Maybe Liar's Invictus would have been a better pick. Nevertheless, it must be cool to receive that kind of recognition. What's your opinion on this?

Justice made a conscious effort to be a unity band above being a straight edge band. We didn't want to exclude non-straight edge people. We didn't hide being straight edge, it was pretty obvious in our artwork, clothes, etc. but we made a point to never write straight edge lyrics. I actually haven't read that book yet, even though I read most books about hardcore and punk, but I'm honoured to be mentioned.

Besides a musician, visual artist and writer, you're also into deejaying, right? What are the bangers that help you to get the crowd moving? DJ's often have the most awkward party stories (most likely because they have to stick through the whole thing without getting all boosed up)... Feel like sharing some embarrassing or outre moments?

I only DJ at a local bar where people want to chill and hear cool music while they hang out. It's pretty laid back, not really a party. I actually used to make flyers that said "No Dancing, No Requests". As for an embarrassing story, a while ago a young girl came up to me at midnight saying it was her birthday and she wanted to know what song was playing when she turned a year older. Of course the song had a weird title: "Theme from The Sadistic Hypnotist". She was trying to write it down and asked for the band name... Al Quick and the Masochists. After that she looked a little concerned and just walked away. Good for her.

How's the creative scene in and around Montreal? Any artists worth checking out (please don't limit yourself to music only)?

Montreal has always been a very good place for creative people, though at this point it seems like the corporate world is trying to take over all music promoting, venues, DIY spaces, etc. so I'm a little bitter about the "creative scene". That said, there's a lot of cool artists in the punk scene like Lisa Czech and Bad Bill. I also love Walter Scott's comics, he used to play in punk bands. There's always been a strong punk scene here, though in the last year we saw the closing of the Loudhouse (a massive punk house that did shows for almost 20 years) as well as Katacombes (a punk venue that was around for 13 years and held Varning fest) so I'm wondering how that will affect new bands coming up. Gazm and their crew are keeping the hardcore scene strong and book a lot of gigs.

Let's talk cover art. One of the nice things of owning records is being able to extensively looking at the cover art (they're fairly unpractical and don't allow you to do much else meanwhile anyway). By doing so occasionally you notice a negligible anomaly or somethings that plainly bothers you (that 'your local amateur art centre'-ish cover on The Boston Strangler's Fire record for example). I can imagine being an illustrator yourself you stared your way through a few records as well. Some curious observations you care to share?

I notice a lot of things like that in my own cover art, not so much in other people's. My drawings are never truly done and I will usually look back at them and wish I had done one tiny detail differently. I think that's human nature? I've spent a lot of time looking at record covers in my life and I have to say I can't really think of anything that sticks out as a having anything that bothers me. Unless we're talking about classic albums reissued with new art… then I could start a really long list of stuff that bothers me.

When thinking about a certain record I never 'just' have the music in mind, but instantly make the connection with the album's visual artwork. Downside is that I write off records just because they look dumb for example Agnostic Front's 'Warriors' or Black Flag's 'What the…'. These covers are unacceptable considering the amount of talent present in the hardcore scene… Would you agree? Can you think of albums that were completely ruined by their visual approach? Come to think about it, that new Cro-Mags 7" looks pretty flat as well (but then again, silly artwork has always been kinda their thing)…

That newer Negative Approach 7" artwork comes to mind… I don't wanna knock the artist, but I thought the slick style of art did not work with the very crude sounding recordings. The ones you mentioned are up there. And a lot of stuff from the late '90s and early '00s looks pretty terrible, with the early digital age coming in and having everyone think they were a graphic designer. Then again, most of the music on those albums sucks too, so maybe it works together.

Every so often we see an obvious trend in the way hardcore records tend to look. For instance when those clean Mike Bukowski graphics were a hot thing, or worse, when the Kurt Ballou-styled photoshop caught on (Bridge Nine used both of these 'styles' rather extensively). What were the crazes you liked/disliked most (and why)? Certain esthetics that should make a reentrance?

I wasn't a fan of either of those phases, and I really hated when everyone wanted to sound and look like American Nightmare. There were some really, really awful attempts at that style. There was also a point where every single hardcore band would do a "ripoff" design. I understand wanting to reference your heroes and I've been guilty of it to an extent, but seeing bands just literally copying the same couple designs over and over gets really old after a couple decades of being into hardcore. If I look at your merch table and it's full of the most obvious and overused

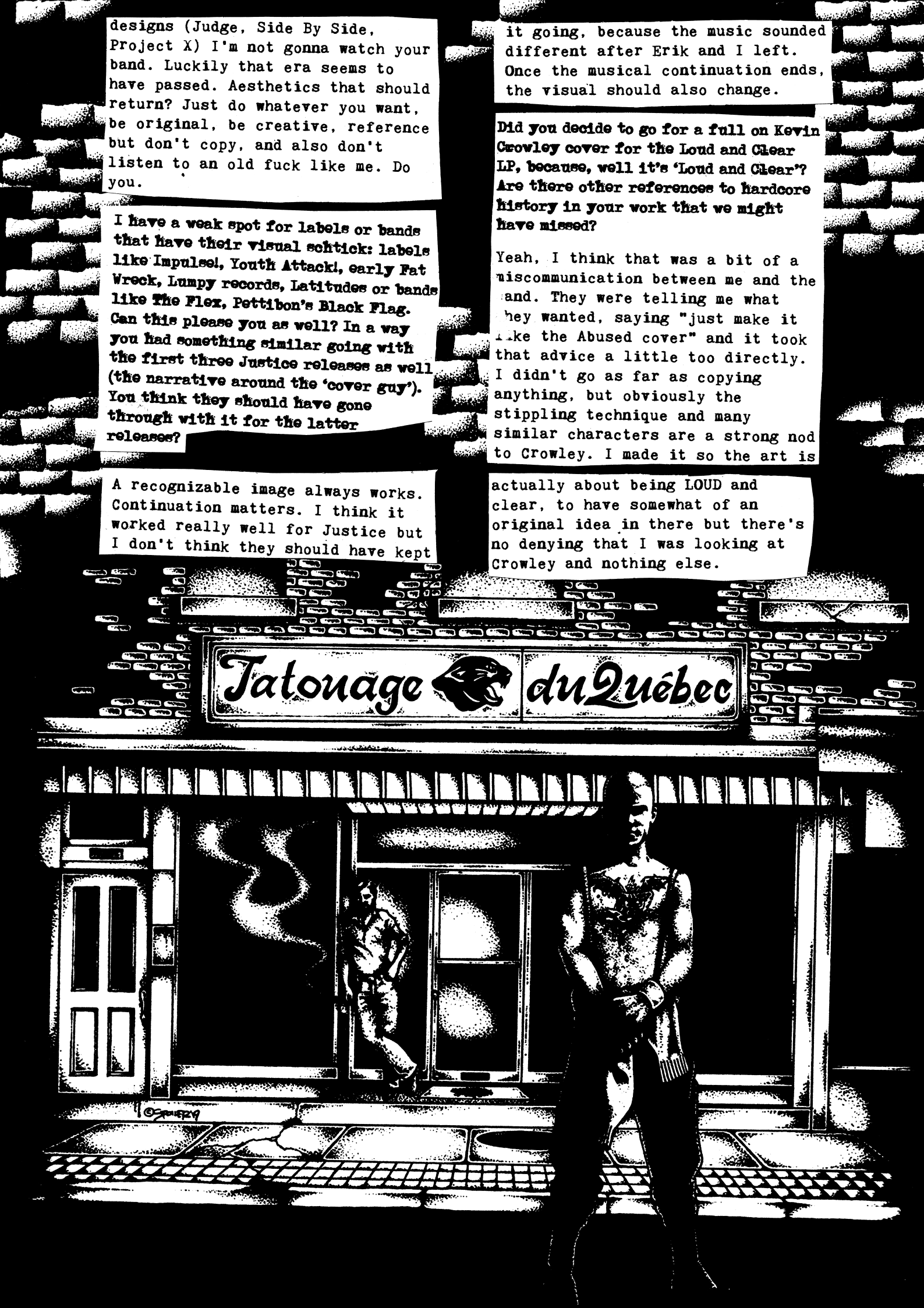
designs (Judge, Side By Side, Project X) I'm not gonna watch your band. Luckily that era seems to have passed. Aesthetics that should return? Just do whatever you want, be original, be creative, reference but don't copy, and also don't listen to an old fuck like me. Do you.

I have a weak spot for labels or bands that have their visual schtick: labels like Impulse!, Youth Attack!, early Fat Wreck, Lumpy records, Latitudes or bands like The Flex, Pettibon's Black Flag. Can this please you as well? In a way you had something similar going with the first three Justice releases as well (the narrative around the 'cover guy'). You think they should have gone through with it for the latter releases?

A recognizable image always works. Continuation matters. I think it worked really well for Justice but I don't think they should have kept it going, because the music sounded different after Erik and I left. Once the musical continuation ends, the visual should also change.

Did you decide to go for a full on Kevin Crowley cover for the Loud and Clear LP, because, well it's 'Loud and Clear'? Are there other references to hardcore history in your work that we might have missed?

Yeah, I think that was a bit of a miscommunication between me and the band. They were telling me what they wanted, saying "just make it like the Abused cover" and it took that advice a little too directly. I didn't go as far as copying anything, but obviously the stippling technique and many similar characters are a strong nod to Crowley. I made it so the art is actually about being LOUD and clear, to have somewhat of an original idea in there but there's no denying that I was looking at Crowley and nothing else.





The HC/Punk scene had their share of legendary illustrators: most notably Pushead, Raymond Pettibon and maybe Sean Taggart (+ Shepard Fairey today?). Yet, the metal scene houses even more legendary artists: Kev Walker (Autopsy), Edward Repka (Death), Vincent Locke (Cannibal Corpse), Derek Riggs (Iron Maiden), Dan Seagrave (so much early death metal)... Are you drawn to these artists and were some of them influential for your graphic work as well?

Definitely. I grew up in a metal family. Both my parents and older brother were into metal, there were records, tapes and posters all over the house, so from birth I was basically surrounded with classic metal imagery. As metal developed and got more extreme, of course my brother and I would try to outdo each other by trying to find the most bad ass metal art. At that time I was too young to care about the artists and their names, I just liked the imagery and felt like it belonged to the bands, so to this day I still don't know a lot about the artists behind a lot of these classic covers. I remember being into Locke because I thought that name sounded cool. I really liked the imagery and logos of thrash and death metal bands and some of my earliest drawings as a young teen were heavily influenced by that style. I remember getting in trouble at school for drawing a demon sitting in a graveyard, ripping apart a corpse. I added in old English font "mutilated after death". My teacher reported it to my parents, they laughed and told the teacher to lighten up.

Of the newer garde illustrators I am especially fond of that hybrid heavy metal / old school tattoo style from Alexander Heir (he's doing a lot of Toxic State related things); I would buy that Stoic Violence record for his cover solely. Any newer artists related to the hardcore scene that caught your attention lately?

Tons of amazing artists in punk and hardcore scenes these days. Nicky Rat, Joe B., Taketo Oregami, Heather Benjamin, Tin Savage, Bad Bill, Seb Elbourne, Emma Hendry, Cassidy McGinley and many more, all doing fantastic work. Also a lot of great tattooers coming from the punk scene like Joe Chatt, Dave English, Sully etc. It's a great time for art and creativity in punk. Once upon a time I truly felt like I was the only one doing hand drawn designs for hardcore bands.

I really dislike reissues with alternate artwork, and I can somehow imagine that you're not into that neither, but if you could redo one cover art which one would you choose (and why)?

I absolutely hate reissues with alternate artwork, and I'm STILL mad about the BDTW reissue and the VIP reissues specifically, but there are a few great albums out there that suffered from bad cover art. I think the second Crumbsuckers album wouldn't be as ignored if the cover looked even half as cool as the first one.

And finally: I think you're no longer doing 'Push The Limit' zine? Do you believe there's still a place for hardcore zines in this day and age? Some zines you would recommend?

I would even say zines are making a comeback! Gratitude, Demystification, Cluehammer, etc. are doing great work. Chiller Than Most had a great run, and there's been anthology books of Hardware and Chunks recently. Sometimes I really miss doing a zine, but I just don't have the time. When I was doing Push The Limit I was in high school and art school, I had all the time in the world. I still dedicate a lot of my time to hardcore and punk these days when I think about it… and I've considered doing a zine again but I'm too busy already. One day, maybe. You never know. If you're reading this and think I should do a zine… no, YOU should do a zine!



REVIEWS

Pressure Pact: Scared Off The Streets LP (Wolves of Hades)

All good man.

Bekëth Nexëhmti: De Fördolda Klangorna LP (Amor Fati)

When Popeyes' new fried chicken sandwich went viral for its deliciousness last week, I did not pause, not even for a second, to consider the vast toll of suffering and environmental destruction inherent in its rise. I am guessing you didn't either; indeed, I can already feel your eyes rolling deep into your head at the mere suggestion that there's anything to feel guilty about regarding the sold-out sandwich. So before we go on, let me warn you: The rest of this column is going to give your eye-rolling muscles a very good workout.

Stigmatism : Stigmatism EP (Beach Impediment)

You want to shake me: *Shut up, killjoy!* Haven't I heard how unspeakably delicious the sandwich is? As The New Yorker proclaimed, "The Popeyes Chicken Sandwich Is Here to Save America." So why spoil this one last true thing by mentioning the squalid, overcrowded, constantly-lit, 40-day life span of the typical factory-farmed, fast-food chicken?

Agnostic Front: Get Loud! (Nuclear Blast)

Or, for that matter, the irony of the sandwich going viral at the same time as heartbreaking pictures of the Amazon rainforest on fire. Many of us, myself included, engage in painless, performative environmentalism. We'll give up plastic straws and tweet passionately that someone should do something about the Amazon, yet few of us make space in our worldview to acknowledge the carcass in the room: the irrefutable evidence that our addiction to meat is killing the planet right before our eyes. After all, it takes only a few minutes of investigation to learn that there is one overwhelming reason the Amazon is burning – to clear ground for cattle ranching and for the cultivation of soy, the vast majority of which goes not into tofu but into animal feed, including for fast-food chicken.

Yellow Eyes: Rare Field Ceiling (Gilead Media)

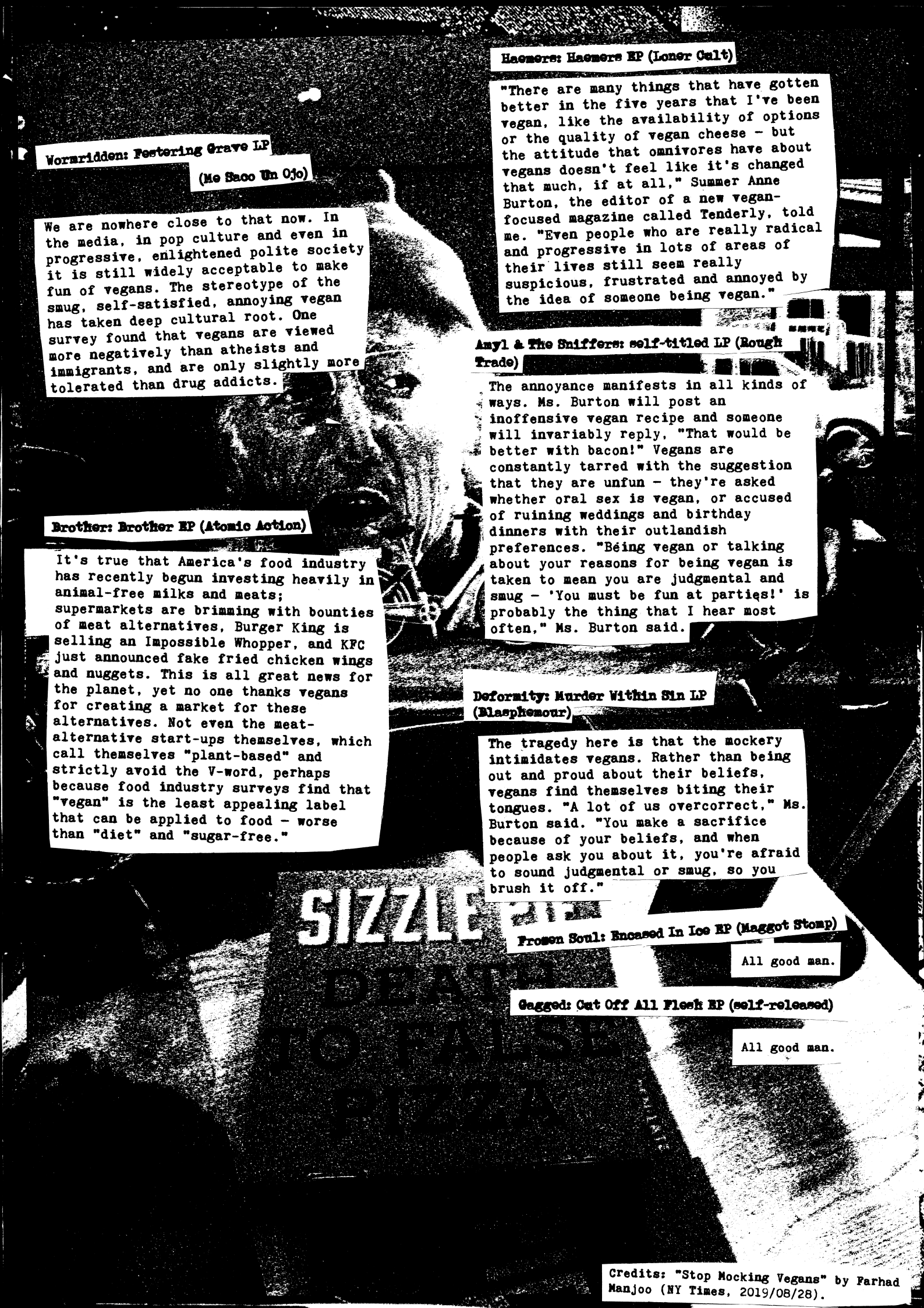
As I say, I did not consider any of this, because I don't regularly come into contact with a lot of preachy vegans. Indeed, preachy vegans are something of a myth. There's an old joke – "How do you know you're talking to a vegan? Don't worry, they'll tell you" – that is as untrue as it is revealing about the teller. Although vegans can marshal stronger evidence to support their claims than adherents of many other belief systems – whether of other diets or major religions – they get little respect, and their ideas rarely receive mass media acknowledgment other than mockery.

Chthonic Deity: Reassembled In Pain EP (Woodsmoke, Carbonised & Lunar Tomb)

I am not a vegan. I am barely, failingly, a vegetarian/pescatarian – I make an effort to avoid meat, but for reasons of convenience and shameless hedonism still end up eating it several times a month, especially fish. My purpose here is not to change how you eat, dress or think about the ethics of consuming something like the Popeyes' sandwich. Instead, as a fellow omnivore and a person concerned about the planet's future, I want to ask you to do something much more simple: to alter how you think about vegans.

WarrGamee : Violent & Depressed EP (Refuse, React!)

I want to urge you to give vegans a chance – to love and to celebrate them instead of ridiculing them. We need more vegan voices, because on the big issues – the criminal cruelty of industrial farming; the sentience and emotional depth of food animals; the environmental toll of meat and the unsustainability of its global rise – vegans are irrefutably on the right side of history. They are the vanguard. Climate scholars say that if we are ever to survive a warming planet, people will have to consume far fewer animals than we do now. We will all have to become a little more vegan – and if we are to succeed in that, we will have to start by saluting vegans, not mocking them.



Haemers: Haemers EP (Loner Cult)

"There are many things that have gotten better in the five years that I've been vegan, like the availability of options or the quality of vegan cheese – but the attitude that omnivores have about vegans doesn't feel like it's changed that much, if at all," Summer Anne Burton, the editor of a new vegan-focused magazine called Tenderly, told me. "Even people who are really radical and progressive in lots of areas of their lives still seem really suspicious, frustrated and annoyed by the idea of someone being vegan."

Wormridden: Festering Grave LP (Me Saco Un Ojo)

We are nowhere close to that now. In the media, in pop culture and even in progressive, enlightened polite society it is still widely acceptable to make fun of vegans. The stereotype of the smug, self-satisfied, annoying vegan has taken deep cultural root. One survey found that vegans are viewed more negatively than atheists and immigrants, and are only slightly more tolerated than drug addicts.

Amyl & The Sniffers: self-titled LP (Rough Trade)

The annoyance manifests in all kinds of ways. Ms. Burton will post an inoffensive vegan recipe and someone will invariably reply, "That would be better with bacon!" Vegans are constantly tarred with the suggestion that they are unfun – they're asked whether oral sex is vegan, or accused of ruining weddings and birthday dinners with their outlandish preferences. "Being vegan or talking about your reasons for being vegan is taken to mean you are judgmental and smug – 'You must be fun at parties!' is probably the thing that I hear most often," Ms. Burton said.

Brother: Brother EP (Atomic Action)

It's true that America's food industry has recently begun investing heavily in animal-free milks and meats; supermarkets are brimming with bounties of meat alternatives, Burger King is selling an Impossible Whopper, and KFC just announced fake fried chicken wings and nuggets. This is all great news for the planet, yet no one thanks vegans for creating a market for these alternatives. Not even the meat-alternative start-ups themselves, which call themselves "plant-based" and strictly avoid the V-word, perhaps because food industry surveys find that "vegan" is the least appealing label that can be applied to food – worse than "diet" and "sugar-free."

Deformity: Murder Within Sin LP (Blasphemour)

The tragedy here is that the mockery intimidates vegans. Rather than being out and proud about their beliefs, vegans find themselves biting their tongues. "A lot of us overcorrect," Ms. Burton said. "You make a sacrifice because of your beliefs, and when people ask you about it, you're afraid to sound judgmental or smug, so you brush it off."

Frozen Soul: Encased In Ice EP (Maggot Stomp)

All good man.

Gagged: Cut Off All Flesh EP (self-released)

All good man.

Credits: "Stop Mocking Vegans" by Farhad Manjoo (NY Times, 2019/08/28).


SIENS